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20 PAGES 150 FILS

Ceausescu, wife executed, '60,000 died' for freedom

'It's imperialist mass media plot'

Iran denies fighting role

NICOSIA, Dec 26. (AP): Iran today denied reports that Iranian forces were fighting to buttress forces loyal to deposed Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausescu, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

The circulation of much allegations was in line with the imperialist mass media's plots to mar relations between the Iranian and Romanian peoples, "it quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry source as saying.

The report that Iranians were fighting in Romania, broadcast in Romania and attributed to an army spokesman, was mentioned by the British Broadcasting Corp in its newscasts earlier in the day.

Ceausescu, 71, was ousted Friday but tens of thousands of people reportedly have been killed in bloody fighting

between the regular army and the security forces or securitate.

Iran yesterday denied reports that Ceausescu stashed away a fortune in gold in Tehran banks and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Iran supported the Romanian uprising.

That assurance followed a wave of Iranian media criticism of the Foreign Ministry for arranging the official visit of Ceausescu last week, during which a big oil-and-gas deal was signed.

The Romanian reports of Iranians fighting alongside the hated securitate have not given details, and one observer told the BBC that there was confusion in Romania about people of "Middle Eastern" origin.

Xmas amid hope, agony

NEW YORK, Dec 25. (AP): Romanians and Panamanians braved gunfire to celebrate Christmas. Lebanese shopped in sandwiched stores, Filipinos lit candles for peace and Pope John Paul II's midnight mass was broadcast for the first time in East Germany.

Thousands of joyous West Germans took their first stroll on the other side of the Berlin Wall yesterday after East Germany lifted visa and currency requirements in time for the holidays.

And millions throughout the formally rigid communist states of Eastern Europe enjoyed their first Christmas in four decades with the promise of freedom.

In Bucharest, Romania, people lit candles in Romana Square today for those who died in the struggle to overthrow the regime of communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

Yesterday, some families carried freshly cut Christmas trees during a hunt in fighting between a revolutionary government and forces loyal to Ceausescu, who was ousted on Friday. Sniper fire later cleared the streets.

Snipers also made streets in Panama City dangerous, and many families in the city of one million had nothing to give their children.

"What am I going to tell my six-year-old daughter? I cannot tell her Santa Claus was killed by a bomb," the woman in a middle-class neighborhood said.

Some resorted to looting. Looters packed boxes and bags from debris-strewn stores. At one supermarket a man said he arrived too late for food, but had clothes for his children.

"This is their Christmas," he said.

Lebanese celebrated Christmas with a desperate intensity. Many tried to blot out the horror and the hardships brought by 14 years of civil war.

"I want to spend the coming week drinking, dancing and just living. Who knows if we'll be alive tomorrow?" said Khalil Accad, a Christian in East Beirut.

Thousands of Filipinos lit candles in front of homes, businesses and military camps in an appeal for peace in their troubled land, where at least 113 were killed during a coup attempt earlier this month.

See pages 2 and 9

Weather

TEMPERATURE will be above normal with light to moderate southerly wind.
State of sea: Slight to moderate High water: 12.00 pm, 10.00 pm Low water: 5.20 am, 4.30 pm Sunrise: 6.40 am Sunset: 4.57 pm Max/min temperatures recorded:
Khartoum: 20°C 63°F
Juba: 17°C 63°F Minimum temperatures recorded:
Khartoum: 7°C 45°F
Juba: 12°C 54°F
Fualaka: 12°C 54°F Maximum temperatures expected:
Khartoum: 20°C 68°F
Juba: 18°C 64°F
Fualaka: 18°C 64°F
Relative humidity recorded:
Khartoum: 47 per cent Juba: 46 per cent
Fualaka: 47 percent

What did the Pope get for Christmas?



Panamanians celebrate the surrender of Noriega.

Noriega

Vatican grants sanctuary Spain asked for asylum

PANAMA CITY, Dec 25. (Agencies): General Manuel Antonio Noriega's future was an open question as the deposed Panamanian strongman remained sheltered in the Vatican's embassy today under heavy guard by hundreds of US troops.

Vatican officials say they will not turn Noriega over to the United States, which wants to try him on drug trafficking charges, and the new Panamanian government of President Guillermo Endara said it is barred by law from extraditing Noriega to the United States.

Noriega's capture was the key goal of a massive US invasion of Panama six days ago.

"We laid very heavy security down," said a US official. "We're going to make damn sure he doesn't escape in some sneaky way."

Noriega took refuge yesterday in the Papal Nuncio's residence in the seaside Paitilla area of Panama City after five days on the run.

But his future remained an open question. The White House said on Saturday it wanted him returned to the United States to face criminal charges, but the Pope's envoy, Jose Sebastian

(Continued on Page 10)

Over 40 killed in clashes between rival Tamil groups in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, Dec 25. (Reuters): More than 40 people were killed in clashes between rival Tamil guerrilla groups in Sri Lanka's eastern province today, police sources said.

Police found 44 bodies with gunshot wounds at Welikanda in the Polonnaruwa district this morning after villagers reported hearing gunbattles in the jungle.

An officer in Polonnaruwa said the victims were believed to be members of the illegal Tamil National Army (TNA). He

said 170 more members of the TNA surrendered to police the same day.

Military sources in Colombo have said the TNA has about 4,000 fighters and was set up by the Tamil People's Revolutionary Liberation Front, which is battling for supremacy against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Police and residents said last week that at least 150 people died in street battles between the TNA and the Tigers in the

eastern Batticaloa district.

The Tigers, the most powerful Tamil guerrilla group, may have cornered a group of fleeing TNA fighters and engaged them in a gunbattle, police sources said today.

The Colombo government has accused India of training and arming the TNA to carry on its work after Indian troops vacate Sri Lanka. The charge has been denied.

India sent about 50,000 soldiers to Sri Lanka in 1987 at Colombo's request to help suppress a separatist revolt by the Tamil minority. Some 25,000 remain and India has agreed to do its best to withdraw all troops by December 31.

The Tigers said last week that they were renouncing violence after a 17-year separatist campaign but would not lay down their weapons until their rivals did so.

Soviets recognise Front; 'Libyans caught'

BUCHAREST, Dec 25, (Agencies): Deposed Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife Elena were executed by the army today, the National Salvation Front announced on television.

The former ruling couple were said to have been arrested by troops on Friday after they sought to escape from the country.

The Front, acting as Romania's interim government, also announced that 60,000 people had died since the start of a popular revolt against Ceausescu this

month.

Ceausescu and his wife were executed after a secret trial. Romanian television said.

A television announcer read a list of six indictments on which Ceausescu, who ruled Romanian for 24 years, had been convicted.

"He was found guilty and the execution was carried out," the announcer added.

The Soviet Union said today it had granted de facto recognition to the National Salvation Front.

In Moscow's clearest statement of support for the new interim government in Bucharest, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Aboimov said: "As for official recognition, this is unlikely to cause any problems for us."



A portrait of Ceausescu showing him with a beard and wearing Arabic head gear is carried by marchers celebrating his downfall.

World rushes to aid Romania

VIENNA, Dec 25. (Reuters): Medicine, drugs and food from around the world have started arriving in Romania, but the National Salvation Front government says the ravaged country still needs more.

A Libyan embassy statement said the reports on the participation of Libyan elements in the fighting are baseless and have no goal but to tarnish the image of Libya and its reputation.

"Our policy has always been and will continue to be in favour of the causes of the people," concluded the statement.

Rejected

Ceausescu, who sternly ruled for 24 years and rejected the reforms sweeping Eastern Europe, spent Christmas a prisoner of his own army, awaiting trial for abuses of power.

But members of the hated Securitate security force, which Ceausescu built to protect himself and his Stalinist regime, fought for their lives in desperate

Liya and its reputation.

Bulgaria had sent its northern neighbour 40 tonnes of aid, including blood, plasma, food and clothes, the Bulgarian news agency BTA reported.

Governments and relief organisations are marshalling massive amounts of supplies to help victims of the bloody revolution.

Antulay had to leave office some years ago after the media publicised certain scandals.

Partymen felt that the Congress would have, perhaps, done better to field some other senior leaders like P.V. Narasimha Rao or Vasant Sathe or even someone

Cong (I) loses round 1

By Thomas Abraham
Arab Times correspondent

NEW DELHI, Dec 25: If the opening week of the current session of Parliament — in any indication, the Congress despite its impressive strength in both houses, will have to work harder to prove itself as a credible opposition.

Round one has more or less gone to the National Front and its allies, despite some brave attempts by the Congress to assert itself as the single largest party in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

In the Lok Sabha, the major event of the week was the vote of confidence that Prime Minister V.P. Singh sought and won. The Congress insisted on a debate on the motion and four hours were set apart for it. But the Congress' decision to field former Maharashtra chief minister A.R. Antulay was a little difficult to understand even for partymen.

Antulay had to leave office

some years ago after the media

publicised certain scandals.

Partymen felt that the Congress would have, perhaps, done better to field some other senior leaders like P.V. Narasimha Rao or Vasant Sathe or even someone

younger like P. Chidambaram.

This is not to detract from the fact that Antulay is considered a good parliamentarian, but the decision to field him in the first major debate may not have been very wise.

Antulay, of course, made things worse and invited trouble by speaking of the erstwhile ruling party's magnanimity in not staking a claim to form the government after the elections.

The Congress had offered the government to the National Front on a platter, he claimed.

Congress men now feel that Antulay would have done better if he, like Rajiv in his farewell

address to the nation, had accepted the people's verdict with humility. He also referred to the National Front government as one with "two heads and three legs" — a reference to the support it has got from both the left and the right.

When V.P. Singh finally got up to reply, he had the house laughing by saying, "I know Antulay's many talents. He is talented in cementing arguments. But when I examine them I find that there is more sand and less of cement". These words that reminded Antulay uncomfortably of his scandal-ridden tenure as chief minister of Maharashtra.

DAY BY DAY

WITH the downfall of the East European regimes and the Romanian dictator, talk on progressive policies has become very doubtful — particularly for those who have been deceived by it for the past 40 years.

These regimes have been talking of progressive policies and attitudes as if others were backward and reactionaries and they alone had vision and foresight.

The cheats have now fallen and their falsehood exposed. It must be remembered lies do not last long.

Zahed Matar

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Important Announcement

Change of Telephone numbers

The National Cleaning Company announces to its respected customers that from 25/12/1989, all the company's administration telephone numbers will be replaced with an automatic switch board and the new telephone number will be

4767545

INTERNATIONAL

Filipino communists warn of US intervention

MANILA, Dec 25, (UPI): The outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) today warned of "deepening US intervention" after Washington provided air cover that prevented the collapse of President Corazon Aquino's government in a recent coup.

In its first reaction to the US "per-

susion flights" during the Dec 1-7 coup attempt, the party said in a statement sent to news agencies that the US involvement presented "greater opportunities" in their struggle.

The shameless manner by which the Aquino regime asked for US succor to quell the rebellion has dramatically shown the loss of its remaining claims to

(its) mandate and exposed its ineptitude to rule," said the statement which marked the CPP's 21st anniversary.

"The regime offers no other alternative to the people but deepening US intervention and control of our national affairs," it said.

President Bush, on Aquino's request,

sent F-4 Phantom jets into the air on the first day of the coup attempt, averting what military and defence officials said was a possible defeat for the government.

Unidentified gunmen yesterday sprayed bullets from a car and lobbed a grenade at the United States information office in the southern city of

Davao, shattering the glass door and windows but causing no injuries, police said.

The Davao incident, which was staged moments after a Christmas truce between the government and the rebels took effect, is the third attack on a US facility in 10 days.

Last Dec 14, unidentified men riding

a van fired rifle grenades into the US embassy's seafront recreational centre in Manila, causing minor damage but no injuries.

Hours later, a grenade exploded on the roof of the home of the US agricultural attaché in the Makati financial district, wounding a Filipino carpenter doing repair work.

Pope prays for Romania

Queen hails changes in East Europe

VATICAN CITY, Dec 25, (Reuters): Pope John Paul II, in his Christmas message, asked for a special blessing for Romania, a country he said was marking the birth of Christ "in fear and trembling" as it resumed a path of freedom.

And in London Queen Elizabeth hailed changes in eastern Europe in her Christmas message.

The Pope was addressing tens of thousands of people in St Peter's Square for his twice-yearly "urbi et orbi" message to the city and the world.

"In particular, bless at this hour, O Lord, the noble land of Romania.

which is celebrating this Christmas in fear and trembling, with sorrow for the many human lives tragically lost and in the joy of having taken once more the path of freedom."

Romanians celebrated Christmas free of official disapproval for the first time in 45 years. Thousands have died in fighting following the overthrow of President Nicolae Ceausescu.

The Pontiff made no reference to a request for asylum by deposed Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega, who gave himself up at the Vatican's nunciature (embassy) in Panama City last night.

"In particular, bless at this hour, O Lord, the noble land of Romania.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pakistan test tube babies: Six test tube babies would be born next year in Pakistan.

Dr Rashid Latif told official news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) that first of the six such births would occur in April. He had supervised the birth of first test tube baby in Pakistan last July.

Dr Rashid said so far about five couples had given birth through test tube method in Pakistan. He said hundreds of couples wanted to benefit from this technique.

He said an expenditure of about \$2,000 was incurred in Pakistan for this type of birth. He added in foreign countries it could go up to \$10,000. (Kuna)

** *

Bomb explosion in Chile: Three bombs exploded over the Christmas weekend at Mormon chapels in Santiago and two provincial cities, causing extensive damage but no injuries, police reported.

Two explosions occurred on Sunday, Christmas eve, in Santiago and Rancagua, a mining city 82 kms (50 miles) south of the capital, police said.

In Santiago, the blast severely damaged the small Mormon temple in La Florida, a southern Santiago suburb.

Early Saturday, police said, another bomb went off at the entrance to a Mormon chapel in Quillipe, a city 158 kms (92 miles) northwest of Santiago, destroying the door and shattering windows.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the explosions.

However, a radical leftist group called Commando Lautaro has taken responsibility in recent years for several similar attacks on Mormon Chapels throughout the country, saying the church is "a tool of yankee imperialism."

Church spokesmen have repeatedly denied the accusation, noting that a large majority of the 300 Mormon missionaries working in Chile are Chileans, not Americans.

The group takes its name from an Indian chief who fought the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century. (AP)

25 killed in Mozambique: Rebels massacred at least 25 civilians abducted from their homes in southern Mozambique, the national news agency reported Sunday.

Aim news agency said the killings occurred Friday near Xai-Xai, capital of Gaza province. It said at least 19 people were wounded.

The killings were blamed on guerrillas of the rightist Mozambique National Resistance, which has waged a hit-and-run insurgency against the leftist government since 1977. (AP)

Two expeditions scale Himalayan peaks: Korea's Bo-Youl Kim, 28, and Dawa Tshering Sherpa, 28, scaled the 6,427-metre (21,086-ft) high Langshisari on Dec 14 at 9:19 am starting from their final camp at 5,800 metres (19,000 ft), the Katmandu Ministry of Tourism said today.

Real happy German Xmas

EAST BERLIN, Dec 25, (Reuters): East and West Germans celebrated their happiest Christmas in 40 years today with thousands of visitors streaming across the Berlin Wall, opened six weeks ago and marking the end of the cold war.

Crowds milled around the Brandenburg Gate, a potent symbol of the division of Germany and Europe, and hundreds of West Berliners in bright sunshine on Unter Den Linden, the elegant old boulevard in the centre of East Berlin.

In a special Berlin celebration Leonard Bernstein conducted an orchestra and choir from East and West in a rousing performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, broadcast live on East and West German television and in 21 other countries.

In a tribute to the wave of freedom sweeping Eastern Europe, he changed the first word of the chorus of Schiller's ode to joy from "freude" (joy) "freiheit" (freedom).

Border police in the West German town of Braunschweig said West German motorists were queuing for up to three hours to cross the border into East Germany.

Long lines were also reported at the Glienecke bridge crossing between West Berlin and Potsdam, scene of many cold war East-West spy swaps, as West Berliners set out for excursions to the former Prussian royal palace.

East Berlin lifted the last visa and currency exchange requirements for West German visitors on Christmas Eve in a crumbling communist economy.

The head of East Germany's Protestant church, Bishop Werner Leich, told worshippers in Erfurt the country was undergoing "a peaceful revolution for the establishment of a real democracy."

He appealed for non-violence and reconciliation. Church leaders have warned that the power vacuum left by the collapse of the communist system could lead to anarchy.

Both Leich and Roman Catholic Bishop Joachim Wanke urged East Germans not to seek revenge against officials of the former Stalinist regime.

"It is a celebration of joy," an elderly West Berliner said yesterday as he walked to East Berlin through the Brandenburg Gate.

At many crossings, residents dressed up as Santa Claus to welcome visitors from the other side of the city, distributing champagne, coffee and sausages.

Cold wave kills four in Bangla

DHAKA, Dec 25, (Reuters): A cold wave sweeping north Bangladesh killed at least four people in the past three days, officials said today.

They said the victims died in their sleep from exposure in temperatures of six degrees Celsius (42.8 Fahrenheit) in Pabna district.

"Many of you will have heard of the greenhouse effect and perhaps you've heard, too, about even more urgent problems caused by the pollution of our rivers and seas and the cutting down of the great forests," she said.

Some species of wild plants and animals were bound to become extinct, she said, but it was not too late to reduce the damage if people changed their attitudes to the environment.

Nu said at the time that he was merely reclaiming the power he had held as Burma's democratically elected leader until a military coup in 1962 brought down his government.

Nu told reporters that two executive committee members of the League for Democracy and Peace had been told by the Saw Maung government that he had to dissolve his parallel government by Dec 26 or face legal action. Nu serves as a patron of the League.

Last month a government spokesman said Nu and other politicians had to dissociate themselves from "illegal organization" if they wanted to run in general elections scheduled for next May.

Nu defies Burmese government

RANGOON, Dec 25, (AP): Defying Burma's military rulers, former prime minister Nu said today he would not dissolve the "parallel government" he announced during Burma's pro-democracy uprising in 1988.

"I will not dissolve the parallel government and I am prepared to face any consequences," Nu told a press conference at his residence.

Declaring himself prime minister, Nu formed a 26-member cabinet in Sept 1988 as a nationwide pro-democracy movement faced-off against Burma's authoritarian regime. The military brutally crushed the uprising later that month and instituted martial law led by Gen. Saw Maung.

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Smoke billows from fires at the Exxon Co. refinery after explosions of at least 70,000 barrel diesel fuel holding tanks in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. (Reuter wirephoto).

Blast, fire at US oil refinery

One dead, scores of workers injured or missing

BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, Dec 25, (AP): A thunderous explosion and fire struck the nation's second largest refinery, killing one person and leaving an undetermined number of workers injured or missing, officials said.

The blast occurred last afternoon at an Exxon refinery just two miles (3 km) north of downtown Baton Rouge, and could be felt up to 15 miles (25 km) away.

A plume of smoke rose 500 feet (150 metres) into the air as flames engulfed five storage tanks holding more than four million gallons of oil, officials said.

The refinery was sealed off as Exxon firefighters battled the blaze.

"We suspect a gas release caused it," said plant manager Ed Galante.

Eight hours after the blast, eight storage

tanks were ablaze. Company officials said there was no danger for the fire spreading further, but could not estimate when the blaze would be extinguished.

The burning chemicals were all non-toxic hydrocarbons: propane, ethane and diesel fuels, and no evacuations were necessary, officials said.

About 50 national guardsmen were called out after looters hit stores where windows were blown out.

An employee of a subcontractor doing work at the plant was killed when the pickup truck he was in caught fire in the explosion, worker David Abshire said outside the refinery.

Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer was at the governor's mansion in the downtown when the explosion occurred. He went to the scene.

of stuff," Abshire said. "I was in a daze and was just running in circles."

Galante said the report of a fatality had not been confirmed, but that there were a number of undetermined injuries among workers.

"We have many cuts and bruises on the grounds but only two have been hospitalized," he added.

The company also reported a number of people unaccounted for, said Dan D'Armond, a US Energy Department official.

The blast knocked out electric power and telephone service in the area and halted production at the plant, which is located on the Mississippi River.

Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer was at the governor's mansion in the downtown when the explosion occurred. He went to the scene.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

DRYDEN, New York: Authorities were searching for leads in the mysterious killing of a family of four found dead in their burning home. State police captain Robert Farrant said authorities were seeking information from neighbours who know of people harbouring ill feelings towards the four victims, who were discovered early Saturday morning.

The victims were identified as Anthony Harris, 39, his wife Delores Harris, 41, and their two children Shelly, 15, and Mark, 11.

Police have not released information on the exact cause of death.

All four lived at the family home in Dryden, a small community on the Finger Lakes just east of Ithaca.

Anthony Harris was employed by Deance Inc., a computer parts firm.

Police have established that the killings occurred between 6 pm and 10:15 pm Friday night, Farrant said.

He said police also believed the person or persons who committed the crime stole the Harris' van from the house's garage, drove it to the East Hill Plaza just outside Ithaca and then abandoned it.

Police said they thought the van was left between 10 pm and 1 am Saturday morning.

Authorities were trying to determine the number of perpetrators and how they entered the house, Farrant said.

He said police were first called to the house by a neighbour.

A neighbour tried to contact the family and was unable to. He then called police, Farrant said.

"An officer discovered smoke and flames and one deceased body. But he had to back off because of the smoke and flames." (UPI)

LONDON: Britain's first two astronauts are home from the Soviet Union for Christmas, but are spending their break of near isolation because of a flu epidemic in Britain that could jeopardize plans for a joint space mission.

The astronauts, Maj. Timothy Mace of Britain's army air corps and Helen Sharman, a research technician from Britain's Marconi Chocolate factory, returned to British medical agencies reported that about 10 per cent of the country's population has contracted the flu.

One of the two astronauts will be chosen to blast off from Star City — the Soviet Union's space training centre near Moscow — in April 1991 for an eight-day Anglo-Soviet space mission.

But Mace said Soviet scientists have warned them that the epidemic of flu that swept Britain in the weeks before Christmas could jeopardize their chances of returning the space colony and joining the mission.

Star City — population 40 cosmonauts — is a very closed community, Mace, 34, told London's Sunday Times.

"If we took the flu over there, it could spread like wildfire," he told the Times.

The two men, who were due to return to the Soviet Union on Tuesday, were spending a relatively solitary Christmas break, with Mace alone in the county of Hampshire and Sharman locked away with her parents in Lincolnshire.

Mace and Sharman were chosen for the mission in November after they and about 13,000 other people answered a newspaper advertisement that read: "astronaut wanted; no experience necessary."

The Briton chosen for the Soviet mission will orbit the Earth performing scientific experiments. (UPI)

CHICAGO: Smoke in the cockpit forced a United Airlines jetliner with 234 people aboard to return to O'Hare International Airport on Sunday, and an American Airlines jet landed safely after suffering hydraulic problems, officials said. There were no injuries.

United Flight 103 had just taken off from Chicago's O'Hare airport on a morning flight to Los Angeles where smoke was detected in the cockpit of the DC-10, said United spokesman Joe Hopkins.

The pilot turned the plane around and brought it in with emergency vehicles standing by. None of the 224 passengers or 10 crew members was injured in the incident, Hopkins said.

Passengers were put on another flight that departed a short time later, and United mechanics examined the plane to determine the fault, he said.

American Airlines Flight 394, a Boeing 727 flying from Seattle to Chicago with 130 passengers and seven crew members on board, landed without incident after one of its three hydraulic systems became inoperative, said airline spokesman Lowell Duncan.

"There was no major problem," said Duncan, adding that the plane had two backup hydraulic systems. "The plane had a normal landing." (AP)

MADRID: Two seamen were missing after a Romanian freighter sank off Spain's northwest coast on Sunday, Spanish rescue services said.

A spokesman said the Tolokovets went down after being smashed by high waves off Cape Finisterre.

A rescue helicopter plucked 14 of the ship's 16 Romanian crewmen from a lifeboat.

Among the survivors was the captain of the vessel, which was carrying cargo to Britain from the Romanian port of Constanta. (Reuters)

Record cold wave gives first white Christmas

Emergency declared in Florida

NEW YORK, Dec 25, (AP): A state of emergency has been declared in Florida because of the record cold wave, which stranded travellers and overloaded power plants and gave parts of the south their first white Christmas in more than a century.

Snow drifts stood up to 8 feet (2.4 metres) high in South Carolina, and Wilmington, North Carolina, recorded its greatest snowfall ever — at least 15 inches (38 cms). The blizzard caused a 600-foot (180-metre) navy tanker to run aground on North Carolina's outer banks.

At least 83 deaths have been blamed on the weather since Dec 15 from the plains to the east

coast.

Warmer weather moved eastward with temperatures hitting 40 degrees Fahrenheit (4 degrees Celsius) at Chamberlain, South Dakota. Kansas City, Missouri, had a December record of 16 below zero (-20 degrees Celsius) Saturday, but highs in the 30s and 40s (0 to 6 degrees Celsius) were predicted in the region Monday.

Temperatures also rebounded into the low 50s (low teens) in Texas, but temperatures as low as 11 degrees (-20 degrees Celsius) over the weekend devastated the lower Rio Grande Valley's citrus crop, and forecasters predicted more freezing weather on Christmas day.

"It's going to take probably weeks and maybe months to determine how much damage we've had," said Richard Hensz, director of the Texas A&M University citrus centre in Weslaco. "But it's very extensive."

Florida Governor Bob Martinez declared a state of emergency Sunday as even Miami plunged to 31 degrees Fahrenheit (-5 degrees Celsius). The cold damaged citrus, sugar cane and strawberries. Stranded holiday travellers and forced utilities to impose rolling blackouts.

"There is no one smiling in Florida agriculture today," said Roy Park of Parkdale farms in plant city, a large producer of winter strawberries.

47 dead in Xmas eve fires

JOHNSON CITY, Tennessee, Dec 25, (AP): Firefighters today found a 16th body and searched for 11 people missing from a fire that swept through a high-rise residential home.

The Christmas eve fire injured 51 people, including about 25 firefighters, authorities said.

About 145 people were living at the John Sevier retirement centre, but authorities said they didn't know how many were in the 11-storey building when the fire broke out.

"But it being Christmas eve, many residents were out of the building visiting families and many relatives were visiting at the centre," city spokeswoman Linda Gordon told reporters.

Christmas eve fires killed at least 31 people in five other states.

Among the dead were six people at a holiday family reunion in Atlanta; a mother and four daughters in a Dallas suburb; four members of a Pittsburgh family; and a woman and her three children in upstate New York.

Firefighters in Manchester, New Hampshire, west as they tried to revive three children who died in an apartment-building fire.

Also in the New Hampshire city yesterday, faulty wiring in a chapel's nativity scene sparked a fire in a convent nursing home. Firefighters rescued 26 elderly nuns, two of whom were hospitalised in satisfactory condition.

In Johnson City, about 100 miles (160 km) northeast of Knoxville, authorities confirmed 15 deaths last night, and a search turned up a 16th body early this morning, said police Maj. Ron Street.

The Red Cross said 11 people remained unaccounted for.

Authorities said they had not determined what caused the blaze, which was believed to have started on the first floor.

It took more than six hours to bring the fire under control.

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MOUSTACHE

INTERNATIONAL

'Reign of terror is over': Bush delighted

US troops ring Vatican embassy in Panama

(Continued from Page 1)
for the poor Vatican. This is not the type of Christmas present they wanted."

General Maxwell Thurman, head of the US southern command, told Reuters today that US troops were still under State Department orders to capture Noriega if he leaves the Nuncio's residence, but that could change.

US troops captured the town of Santiago southwest of Panama City, but otherwise fighting died down as Christmas came to Panama.

About 40 US soldiers kept watch in the pre-dawn darkness of Panama City. A US army Blackhawk helicopter, its running lights turned off, landed several times across the street from the Vatican embassy, then took off. It was not seen picking up or dropping off anyone.

Diplomats have pointed out that Noriega would need safe passage, meaning US troops would make no move to capture him were asylum in a third country arranged.

An aide to Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney, in Panama for a Christmas visit to the 26,000 troops now here, said the White House and the State Department were co-ordinating strategy concerning Noriega's future.

While Noriega's fate remained in doubt, Thurman and other US officials were gratified that he was no longer at large.

"I know where that sucker is," Thurman told Reuters when asked why he was smiling on Christmas morning.

Thurman said the announcement of Noriega's whereabouts had appeared to weaken resistance by his supporters, which earlier in the week had presented US forces with major problems.

The night in Panama City was "quiet, surprisingly quiet," he said.

A southern command spokesman said no Americans had been killed in the previous 24 hours and the death toll had been reduced to 23 from 25 after an error had been found.

Lieutenant Jerry Murgia told a news conference that American wounded now stood at 285 and that one soldier missing in action had been found. Enemy dead stood at 290, with 121 wounded, he said. Large numbers of Panamanian soldiers were turning themselves in and the number of detainees was 3,790.

He had no figure for civilian casualties, but estimates have run into the hundreds.

Groups of members of Noriega's armed Dignity Battalions continued to roam the city, he said, and more isolated incidents of fighting with US troops could be expected.

Dignity Battalion bands and looters ravaged the city in the



Panamanians celebrate outside the Papal Nuncio in Panama City after Noriega sought refuge in the mission. (Reuter wirephoto)



An officer aims his rifle at a high rise building in the distance as his spotter watches for movement from the building. (Reuter wirephoto)



A US soldier watches a downtown Panama City intersection while holding an M60 machine gun. (Reuter wirephoto)

Cheers as Noriega turns himself in

'Mission accomplished: The man has fallen, he is gone'



A member of the 82nd Airborne crouches behind a wall with an advertisement on it during a sweep of the Viejo section of Panama City. (Reuter wirephoto)

PANAMA CITY, Panama, (AP): Word that ousted military leader Gen Manuel Noriega had sought refuge in the Vatican embassy spread like wildfire in Panama City.

Cheers resounded through the embattled capital as the news travelled that Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega sought refuge in the Vatican embassy after eluding capture for five days.

"Is it true?" shouted a woman from her balcony following the first reports Sunday afternoon.

"Mission accomplished," said a passing taxi driver.

A throng of elated Panamanians headed for the Vatican embassy, and as the sun set on Panama Bay the crowd swelled to the hundreds.

People banged pots, cheered and honked horns as they drove up and down barricaded streets, many littered and smoldering from garbage fires and looting.

"The man has fallen, he is gone," exclaimed two young men who said they heard the report on the radio.

"Attention people of Panama. Attention people of Panama," said one excited radio announcer. "There is a report that Noriega has turned himself in. If that's true, there is a fat man that is going to be very happy tonight."

He was referring to newly installed President Guillermo Endara, who could not immediately be reached for comment.

Although there were 26,000 US military personnel in Panama trying to find the general, an informed military source said Noriega drove himself or was driven through the city to the embassy in an upper-class storefront neighbourhood and entered the building alone.

There were no US troops around the two-storey building and garden that occupy half a city block when Noriega arrived at about 3 pm (2000 GMT).

Since the US invasion last Wednesday sent Noriega into hiding, US soldiers have surrounded the Cuban, Libyan and Nicaraguan embassies because it was believed Noriega would seek refuge in one of those countries.

After it was reported that Noriega was inside the Vatican embassy, armoured cars and dozens of paratroopers ringed the site as a helicopter hovered overhead. The crowd of several hundred was kept 100 yards (metres) away.

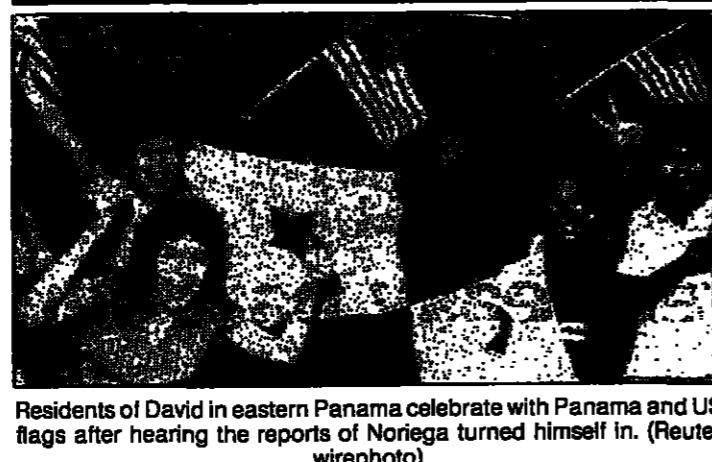
"Now we can have Christmas," said one man, who grabbed a friend and hugged him.

The capital of 1 million had been looking ahead to a bleak Christmas after days of looting stripped stores and there was a shortage of food and items to buy for presents.

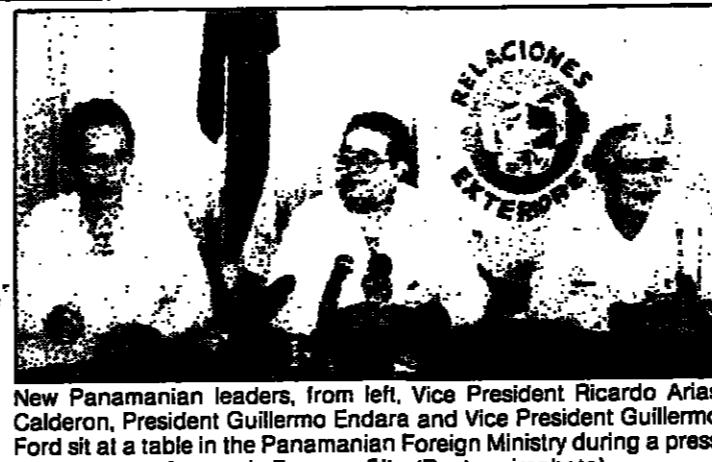
Many people shouted threats from their homes and balconies.

Newscasters issued calls on television for people to stay inside their homes and not to take part in demonstrations because they might get in the way of US troops still looking for Noriega loyalists.

The broadcasts reminded people that a curfew began at 6 pm (2300 GMT) Sunday. Although the curfew has been widely ignored, the crowd began slowly to disperse after sunset.



Residents of David in eastern Panama celebrate with Panama and US flags after hearing the reports of Noriega turned himself in. (Reuter wirephoto)



New Panamanian leaders, from left, Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderon, President Guillermo Endara and Vice President Guillermo Ford sit at a table in the Panamanian Foreign Ministry during a press conference in Panama City. (Reuter wirephoto)

first days of the invasion and on Christmas morning the streets remained littered with garbage and debris.

Murgia and other officials have credited neighbourhood groups, who erected makeshift

barricades throughout the city, with curbing the movement of the battalions and looters.

Resistance in rural areas was light, Murgia said.

In Madrid, Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez

Ordonez said today that Noriega had asked for political asylum in Spain.

"We know he has asked for asylum but haven't any more information," Ordonez told reporters.

President George Bush has welcomed news that Noriega had sought refuge in the Vatican embassy in Panama City, declaring that the deposed leader's "reign of terror is over."

White House spokesman

Martin Fitzwater said top Bush administration officials were meeting into the night at the White House "considering an appropriate course of action for bringing him to justice."

While Fitzwater said the

administration wants to bring Noriega to justice, he declined to say whether that would involve a US effort to gain custody of the general, who is under indictment in the United States on drug trafficking charges.

The Italian news agency Ansa quoted the Papal Nuncio in Panama City, Monsignor Sebastiano Laboa, as indicating he would not hand over Noriega to the United States or the US-installed government in Panama.

Trial in US unlikely

Panama constitution prevents extradition

WASHINGTON, Dec 25, (Reuter): Ousted Panamanian dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega, who has taken refuge at the Vatican's embassy in Panama City, is unlikely to stand trial in the United States despite White House demands he be brought to justice.

Diplomats and commentators say the Panamanian constitution prevents his extradition and even if he were brought to trial it could prove an embarrassment for the US government which once employed him as a spy.

Noriega, hunted by thousands of US troops, walked into the Vatican embassy on Sunday and requested asylum from Papal Nuncio Juan Laboa, having first telephoned the mission.

European and Latin American diplomats suggest the most likely scenario was for Noriega to take asylum in a third country—probably Spain or Cuba—after a guarantee of safe conduct.

One envoy said the ease with which Noriega was able to emerge from hiding may mean a deal for safe passage has been done.

"If the version we hear is correct," he said, "it strikes one as a little strange that a man with a one million dollar bounty on his head and 26,000 US troops looking for him can drive unmolested through Panama City in his car, park it and walk into the nunciature."

The 51-year-old general turned himself in on the fifth day of the huge invasion: the biggest US military operation since Vietnam, the biggest out-of-US paratroop drop since World War Two, the biggest US military strike in Latin America.

One of the stated aims of the operation was to seize Noriega and bring him to trial in Florida on charges that he took \$4.6 million in bribes from Colombia's notorious Medellin cartel to protect cocaine shipments to the United States, launder

drug money, set up laboratories, and shield traffickers.

"The United States will continue to pursue avenues for bringing general Noriega...to justice," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said shortly after the fugitive military leader turned up at the Vatican embassy.

But diplomats and analysts doubted Noriega would ever stand in the dock — where details of his association with the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could severely embarrass the administration of President George Bush a former CIA chief.

"There are absolutely no prospects that Noriega will be tried in the United States," said Larry Birns, a critic of the administration who heads the council on hemispheric affairs, a Washington-based think tank.

"He would resort to the same tactics that (Oliver) North and (John) Poindexter are using," Birns said. "Demand the disclosure of all sorts of information which would force (Attorney General Dick) Thornburgh to say 'these are national security documents.'

Former White House aides North and Poindexter have been on trial for their roles in the Iran-arms scandal in which profits from illegal arms sales to Iran were diverted to right-wing Nicaraguan rebels in defiance of congressional prohibitions.

According to published accounts, Noriega's ties with the CIA date from 1962 when he spied on fellow cadets at Peru's military academy, selling the information to the Americans.

He was a CIA "asset" while Bush was in charge of the agency.

Washington fell out with Noriega in 1987, after years in which he had one foot in the US intelligence community and another in the US southern command in Panama.



A US paratrooper sits in the living room of one of Gen. Noriega's beach homes near Panama city. (Reuter wirephoto)

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One can get sanctuary at an embassy but the person has no right to get out of the country

UNDER international law, embassies are sacrosanct ground. An embassy's territory belongs to the country it represents, not to the country where it is situated. Forces from the outside cannot legally enter embassy territory to seize a person the embassy wants to shelter.

But an embassy's right to grant sanctuary to someone does not mean that person has a right to free passage out of the country. A refugee may have to wait inside the embassy for years until political conditions permit his departure.

Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, the ousted Panamanian military leader, took refuge Sunday in the

papal nunciature, or Vatican embassy, in Panama City, and reportedly sought political asylum.

In June, Chinese dissident Fang Lizhi took refuge inside the US embassy in Beijing. Although talks since then between US and Chinese officials have reportedly touched on Fang's case, he remains holed up in the embassy, liable to arrest if he comes out.

Perhaps the longest instance of political refuge in an embassy involved Hungarian Cardinal Josef Mindszenty, who hid for 15 years at the US embassy in Budapest. He was arrested by Hungary's communist rulers in 1948 as an enemy of communism and sentenced to life in prison.

Hungarian revolutionaries freed him during the 1956 uprising, but Mindszenty took refuge in the US mission in Budapest after Warsaw Pact forces crushed the revolt. He lived there until the Vatican arranged for his release to the West in 1971.

Elsewhere in the East bloc, seven Pentecostalists claiming religious persecution lived for five years in a cramped room at the US embassy in Moscow, leaving in 1983.

Thousands of East Germans seeking to go West took refuge in various West German embassies in September, leading to a pro-democracy campaign that forced the lifting of travel restrictions.

The largest number of people to seek refuge at a foreign embassy at once may have been in Cuba in April 1980, when 10,000 Cubans entered the grounds of the Peruvian embassy seeking to emigrate.

Cuban authorities finally persuaded the crowd to go home, and eventually almost all of them received exit visas.

In 1973, after Salvador Allende was overthrown as president of Chile and died in the coup, his widow and her children received refuge in the Mexican embassy in Santiago. The Mexican government then flew them out of the country.

US-Soviet peace-keeping force urged to avoid N-war

LONDON, Dec 25, (Reuters): General Sir John Hackett, whose chilling vision of world war three was published more than a decade ago, wants to see US-Soviet military co-operation to prevent a nuclear Armageddon.

One of the world's leading scholar-soldiers, Hackett said a superpower clash originating in Europe was far less likely than it had been since 1945 because of nuclear deterrents and was more likely to be sparked by regional conflicts.

Superpower co-operation would reduce the prospect of such conflicts, he believes.

"They ought to know the 6th Fleet would be there overnight with two Russian airborne divisions handy at the drop of a hat to say 'stop it, you stupid people or you're for the high jump,'" Hackett told Reuters in an interview.

In Hackett's 1978 book "The Third World War" Moscow fires a nuclear missile at Birmingham in England prompting a nuclear salvo at Minsk. The

attack provokes uprisings in some Soviet republics, the leadership is overthrown and the war ends.

"The problem for me then was what do we want to see this giant (the Soviet Union) disintegrate and I wrote books around the prospect that it would be a good thing if it did, but since then I've rather wondered."

His vision now is of the East and West working together.

The Iran-Iraq war was a perfect example of

what I had in mind. This was a great opportunity for the US and the USSR to come together and control it...we only got out of it without a major disaster because neither had advanced nuclear weaponry.

Secret contingency plans would swing into operation if a regional war looked as if it could jeopardise world security.

Hackett, who was commander-in-chief British Army of the Rhine and commander northern army group (Nato), said it had always been a "nice fantasy" of his to conduct joint superpower exercises to avoid conflict.

The United States and the Soviet Union could be seen as a Gothic arch. "If one side of the arch disintegrates you've got an untidy mess of rubble," Hackett said.

A world in which two superpowers were opposed but in rough parity of offensive capability made for a more stable situation than if one collapsed, he

said, adding the West should continue to help the Soviet Union with food, technology and resources.

"We don't want to pull the rug from under (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev's feet."

Nuclear arsenals were largely responsible for keeping Europe war-free, said Hackett who was highly-decorated and wounded three times in World War Two.

S. Africa offers dialogue

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 25, (Reuters): President F.W. de Klerk issued a Christmas invitation yesterday to all South Africa's churches to join the government in talks early next year on the country's future.

"I wish to extend an open invitation to all churches to participate, as early as possible in 1990, in broad-ranging and in-depth talks with the government," de Klerk said in an address broadcast on state-run radio and television.

He asked church leaders to tell his office if they wanted to attend the talks and to name subjects for discussion.

The South African Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Reformed Churches include some of the most outspoken critics of the government, such as Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

But the country's biggest church groupings, the all-black independent and self-styled Zionist churches, largely keep out of politics while respecting government authority.

The Dutch Reformed Church, which has close historical ties with the ruling National Party, has abandoned its former support for apartheid and advocates reform.

The government has in the past said churchmen should keep out of politics.

De Klerk said: "The church must continue, within the framework of its boundaries and calling, to involve itself in the creation of a Christian and just new South Africa."

He said the political solution lay in dialogue and negotiation.

Soviet deputies stage a walkout

Protest over Georgia deaths

MOSCOW, Dec 25, (AP): Some 200 deputies stormed out of the Soviet congress yesterday to protest a military prosecutor's claim that subversives provoked the crackdown on ethnic protests in Georgia nearly nine months ago.

The April 9 clash between troops and Georgian protesters left 19 dead, and a 20th died later in a separate incident.

Georgians, representatives of the Baltic republics, progressive deputies and others left the hall when chief military prosecutor Alexander Katusev delivered a speech defending soldiers who charged at protesters with shovels, clubs and gas.

The walkout was one of the largest since the 2,250-member Congress of People's Deputies was formed in March, and it took an appeal by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to cool tempers.



Two Muscovites look at a painting which is on display for sale on Arbat Street in Moscow yesterday. The painting shows Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev with a Pepsi Cola halo and words 'perestroika' save us. (Reuter wirephoto)



Worshippers inside the Gethsemane church in East Berlin. (Reuter wirephoto)

Collapse of dictatorships

Germans offer prayers

EAST BERLIN, Dec 25, (Reuters): "This Christmas, a piece of heaven has become reality on earth," Pastor Werner Widart told a packed congregation in East Berlin's Gethsemane Church, a rallying point in East Germany's democratic revolution.

In a moving Christmas Eve service, he hailed the collapse of Stalinist dictatorships in Eastern Europe and the spread of democratic pluralism, urging followers to turn their energy to the struggle for disarmament.

"Now that the old systems are overthrown, who are our soldiers supposed to protect us against? It used to be the class enemy, but that is not redundant," he said.

Hundreds of youthful worshippers prayed for democracy and disarmament, and collected money for the victims of ousted Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's secret police.

In many East Berlin churches, West Germans joined East German friends and relatives for Christmas Eve services hours after the reformist communist-led government lifted the last visa and currency requirements for visitors from the West.

Soviet party may invalidate decision by Lithuanians

MOSCOW, Dec 25, (Reuters): The Soviet Communist Party's policy-making Central Committee met today to discuss last week's decision by Lithuanian communists to break away from Moscow and form an independent party.

The official news agency Tass, reporting on the opening of the plenary session, said the party's ruling Politburo had "put the matter before a plenum on the basis that it concerns not only Lithuanian communists but it involves the whole party."

It gave no more details but the wording suggested that the Central Committee was preparing to declare the Lithuanian move as invalid and contrary to party statutes.

Soviet President and party General-Secretary Mikhail



The lucky and the luckless

People in West Berlin queue up (left) along the Berlin Wall in front of the historic Brandenburg Gate and Reichstag building. East German government had earlier lifted the visa and currency requirements. An East German border guard prevents Vietnamese people from crossing

the border between East and West Germany. Several hundred Vietnamese tried to cross the border illegally but were held back because they had no passports. (Reuter wirephoto)



Chun Doo Hwan agrees to testify on misuse of power

SEOUL, Dec 25, (Reuters): South Korea's former President Chun Doo Hwan will emerge from internal exile at a Buddhist retreat to testify on alleged corruption and misuse of power during his eight-year rule, state radio said today.

Chun's lawyer Lee Yang-Woo told reporters yesterday Chun had agreed to appear before the National Assembly on Dec 31 to answer questions about "irregularities" during his presidency, especially the army suppression of a civil uprising in 1980, the Korea Broadcasting System said.

About 200 people were killed by official count when the military, under the control of Chun,

brutally crushed the rebellion in the southwestern city of Kwangju.

Lee, accompanied by former security chief Chang Se-Dong, visited Chun to present a list of questions worked out by the four political parties over the past week. Chun instructed him to form a team to prepare the answers, Lee said.

"There seem to be many marginal questions," Lee told reporters. "The problem is not that there are too many questions, it's that some of them are a bit controversial. The team has a really tedious task ahead."

Chun ruled South Korea until popular demon-

strations in June 1987 forced him to agree to the country's first free direct elections, won by ruling party candidate Roh Tae-Woo.

Chun's decision to testify follows a four-party agreement reached last weekend to resolve by the end of 1989 lingering questions over Chun's rule.

As part of the pact, Roh promised opposition leaders he would try to convince Chun and former interim president Choi Kyu-Ha to testify. He would also try to secure the resignation of Chung Ho-Yong, a ruling party politician and former general who is also blamed for the Kwangju incident.

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Kuwait's heritage being slowly eroded

Destruction of Gharabali Souk considered a loss

KUWAIT'S past heritage as reflected in its buildings is now subject to demolition in some areas. Unfortunately, such an act is not being perpetrated by vandals, but by official authorities who should in fact be demonstrating keenness towards preserving past tradition.

A case in point is the Gharabali Souk — part of Kuwait's past which holds many beautiful memories for a large number of citizens and has developed into a prime touristic feature visited by many nationalities.

Kuwait Municipality has lately decided to remove this souk as of the end of this month. Authorities have issued warnings to shop owners who still cling to its shops — even though the electricity has been disconnected.

A local daily interviewed a number of shop owners at Gharabali Souk who expressed their dissatisfaction of the mun-

icipal decision to close the souk and describe it as unjustified. They added that the decision has caused them huge losses and commented that the period indicated by the municipality to vacate their shops is insufficient to settle their affairs.

They stressed that this souk is considered one of the old popular markets in Kuwait that reflects Kuwait's heritage and called for restoring the existing souk to its past glory instead.

Meanwhile, Gharabali Souk patrons stressed that shopping will "loose the age-old style" after the removal of the souk. They describe the municipality's decision as a dangerous indicator and a big loss for people in Kuwait.

Ali Abdul Azz said that Kuwait Municipality has ordered shop owners at Gharabali Souk to vacate the location as of the end of the current month. He added that it is disconnected electricity from all

shops ten days ago which has caused their affairs to end before sunset and led to huge losses. He said that the indicated period for vacating the location is short and will not be sufficient to wind-up their affairs in an organised and business-like manner.

He rejected the municipality's decision because it caused many shop owners huge losses after they were forced to sell their goods at very low prices. He asked officials how they would be compensated for these losses? He indicated that Kuwait Municipality should have given them enough time to enable them to sell their goods without suffering a loss. He hoped that officials will extend the indicated period to three months and reconnect the electricity to their shops.

Ibrahim Abdulla said that Gharabali Souk is one of Kuwait's popular markets and that people have got accustomed to shopping there, particularly those with

limited incomes, in addition to the fact that it is considered a historical market which has its own reputation among its well known patrons.

He described the decision as unfair adding that it is a destruction of Kuwait's heritage. He pointed out that officials should undertake in-depth studies prior to making such decisions. Simultaneously, he called for the restoration of the Gharabali Souk.

Ebil Mohammed Hassan, a shop owner of long standing, estimated his losses to amount to KD 10,000 as he claimed he would be forced to sell at lower prices due to the limited time given to vacate. He added that, with the stringent fiscal policy prevailing in the market, customers are very careful in making purchases and relocating to commercial shops will further aggravate the losses due to the high rents at these new shops.

Call to adopt modern technology

Information centres

THE Information and Communications revolution witnessed by the world during the past few years has made the world look even smaller. Information centres have become easy to access because of the rapid increase in communication technology.

A local daily surveyed the opinions of some specialists who took part in computer application at information centres course which was organised by Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) in co-operation with the Documentation Centre for Arabian Gulf countries headquarters in Baghdad and the Ministry of Information.

Director of Automated Systems and Training at the Information Documentation Centre for Gulf States, Lutfi Shukri Ahmad illustrated the role of the

centre by saying that the Information Documentation Centre is an organisation attached to information ministers at Gulf states. It started its activities in 1981, and mainly aims at organising, and analysing documents and information collected in accordance with modern systems implemented internationally. He explained that the purpose here is to organise information and data at information banks and centres to facilitate data or information recovery and recalling with accuracy and speed.

Networks

He states that centres has organised 30 specialised courses since its establishment in 1982. Shukri described computer applications at information centres to be essential. He indicated that most information centres

have entered computers applications in their operations.

He stated that information centres in the area seek establish information networks to serve centres and to co-ordinate work activities, in addition to linking these centres to international information centres.

Regarding the Arabisation of information centres, he said that some computers available in the market have already progressed in incorporating the Arabisation process. He stated that one of the main problems facing information centres is the shortage of manpower specialised in the information field.

Meanwhile, assistant director of the Computer Department at the Ministry of Information in Qatar, Ahmad Al Soujai criticised the lack of co-operation among

New school administrative system from the new year

A NEW administrative system will be implemented at schools early next academic year, which will replace the usual administrator position of the principal with that of the school director, according to an official source at the Ministry of Education.

The source, quoted by a local daily, said that the ministry would during the second term hold a training course of principals who would take part in the experimental new administrative system at their schools, which included 20 schools four in each area, two for girls and two for boys.

The source added that the new system would entrust the school director with wider authority than that given to principals, included guidance, control and intervention in technical issues, besides his administrative potentials.

The source went on to say that the problem encountered was the presence of a good number of principals, men and women, who showed a lack of competence or a lack of qualification to control technical issues.

He said that those principals would have to take special intensive training courses to upgrade their technical and administrative skills to determine their authority and capability, to shoulder the responsibilities to be entrusted to them.

The source stressed that the success of the new experimental system would lead to the nationwide application at all schools.

From the courts

18-year-old prostitute gets two years jail

KUWAIT'S Criminal Court sentenced an 18-year-old girl to two years' jail for converting her residence into a brothel and also sentenced two men found in her apartment during a police raid.

The court was told that detectives were informed that the girl was entertaining men with sex at her residence and raided the apartment. The detectives found two youths present, but one accosted the detective and managed to flee.

On interrogation of the other youth, he confessed that had sexual relations with the girl in exchange for his paying her rent of the apartment amounting to KD30. The court sentenced him to five years in jail.

The accused who was absconding was subsequently apprehended and confessed that he did assault the security officer, but denied having sex with her. After the court's deliberations, he was sentenced to two years in jail.

7 years for murderer

KUWAIT'S Criminal Court sentenced a man charged with premeditated murder to seven years in jail with hard labour, a fine of KD100 for illegal possession of a murder weapon and ammunition and a customs fine of KD15.

The court acquitted two others charged as being his accomplices in the murder due to lack of conclusive evidence.

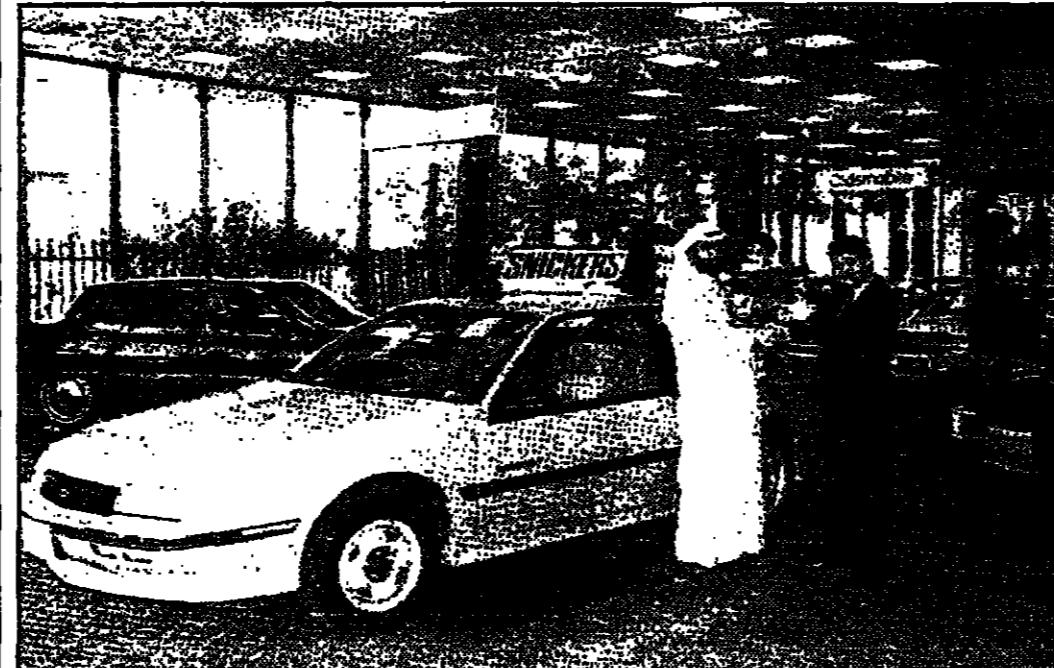
The court was told that the accused broke into the house of the victim with a firearm and aimed to kill him due to a tribal dispute. The other accused were tried for escorting him to foil any attempt of the victim to escape.

The court was told that the accused shot the victim twice and left the victim presumably dead. However, the victim managed to call for help and received timely medical treatment which saved his life.

7 years for moonshiners

KUWAIT'S Criminal Court sentenced three defendants including one woman to seven years in jail each on charges of smuggling and trading in liquor.

The court was told that in addition to the possession and sale of 27 cartons of alcohol, the accused were also found in possession of two machine-guns and a quantity of bullets.



'Spot the ball' winner announced

THE draw for the lucky winner of the highly popular Snickers 'Spot the Ball and Win' competition was held recently at Alghanim Magsoura Car Showroom in Shuwaihi.

Sara Al Gabandi who successfully spotted 'D' as the correct position of the ball is the lucky winner of the exciting new 1990 Chevrolet Beretta GTX.

Due to the popularity of Snickers the competition attracted enormous response throughout Kuwait. Contestants exchanged their Snickers wrappers for a free Snickers sports bag.

The draw was conducted under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, officials.

The Sales Manager of Gulf Trading and Refrigeration Company, Mr San Dajani, is pictured above handing over the keys of the new 1990 Chevrolet Beretta GTX to Mr. Abdul Majeed Al Gabandi, father of Sara Al Gabandi.

Bank mergers not beneficial: Ahmed

Company to purchase debts proposed

THE concept of merging banks is not pragmatic and will not have any clear benefits, because each bank has an independent character in the market and caters to a select category of customers, Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al Ahmed Al Sabah, chairman and managing director of Burgan Bank said.

Burgan Bank

Ebil Mohammed Hassan, a shop owner of long standing, estimated his losses to amount to KD 10,000 as he claimed he would be forced to sell at lower prices due to the limited time given to vacate. He added that, with the stringent fiscal policy prevailing in the market, customers are very careful in making purchases and relocating to commercial shops will further aggravate the losses due to the high rents at these new shops.

He suggested that a Kuwaiti bank or more to purchase one of the famous international financial establishments and further suggested that a company should be established which would facilitate purchasing the debts of debtors who are presently unable to pay their dues to the banks.

The official said that the total amount of debts by customers of Burgan Bank (those that do not

exceed KD 250,000 and that can benefit from the Central Bank's programmes totalled KD 19.6 million against assets of KD 3.7 million.

Profits

Speaking on the debt issue, he said that debts that are difficult to be repaid by debtors to commercial banks have attracted the concern of the state and the latter has offered to support these banks through the Central Bank. This move has enabled the banks to distribute profits and permitted the banks to retain the debts in the light of the programme introduced by the Central Bank to address these bad debts.

Sheikh Ahmed said that the Central Bank was supposed to ask for opinions and comments of officials of local banks prior to publishing the report of the economic committee. The report was published recently and stressed that the negatives of the programme is that banks will be engaged for several years in following up the financial positions of debtors.

The report of the economic committee did not provide any new impetus when it proposed to offer new security facilities which was done by the banks. The main base of the Kuwaiti economy is public spending which in turn is based on the level of oil production and then on the return of foreign investments.

Bulgarian-Turkish talks

Dimitrov hopes for success

KUWAIT, Dec 25, (Kuna): Bulgarian Foreign Minister Boiko Dimitrov expressed hopes for the success of the Bulgarian-Turkish talks scheduled for January 9 in Kuwait.

The Bulgarian official, in an interview with a Kuwaiti daily in Sofia, said that his country was looking forward to a comprehensive settlement to the dispute between the two countries.

The paper noted that the chief diplomat would not directly answer a question on whether the opening of an air route between Sofia and Tel Aviv was a step toward restoring diplomatic relations between the two sides. He said "it is only the opening of an air route."

Dimitrov said that Bulgaria will continue boosting political, cultural and economic relations with the Arab countries on the basis of mutual benefit and joint interest.

The minister further refused to comment on rumours that his government will restore Islamic names to Bulgarian Muslims who were forced in the past to change them, by saying "keenness on finding a root solution calls for ignoring the problem at present."

He pointed out, however, that a partisan committee was formed to study the problem and adopt recommendations on an outlet and underlined that the committee had already started working.

Dimitrov affirmed that solving problems of Bul-

garian Muslims of Turkish origin should be based on human rights doctrines, Helsinki accords and Vienna conventions, pointing out that Bulgarian citizens should be equal before the law regardless of their political convictions or religious beliefs.

According to Dimitrov, neither the government nor the Communist Party's Politburo or Central Committee had prior knowledge of the decisions to change names of Bulgarian Muslims.

On the ongoing events in Romania, Dimitrov was asked to present an official explanation for his country's closure of borders with Bulgaria without advance notice.

He pointed out that the Bulgarian people had organised demonstrations in front of the Romanian embassy in Sofia denouncing the use of force against peaceful demonstrators and elaborated that socialist doctrines should not be separated from respecting human rights, freedom and democracy.

Commenting on the situation in Panama, Dimitrov said that Sofia condemns the American aggression and believes that it caused an abnormal situation in the region that recalls to mind the American state in Lebanon and Grenada.

He also used American justifications, saying what happened cannot be justified regardless of the motives and further contravenes civilised relations between nations and the prevailing atmosphere of international detente.

Toxic waste a major danger

DR MOHAMMED Al Sarawi, Chairman of the Cultural Committee at Environment Protection Society was quoted as saying that the press has a significant role to play towards the spread of environmental awareness among the public. Speaking at a press conference on the perils of toxic wastes, the official said that such wastes have now become a "tradeable commodity" — particularly for those who sell these type of wastes to developing countries.

The two-day meeting agenda

will deal with a report on the institute's activities and a memo on the final account of the fiscal year.

The meeting is attended by representatives from United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Mauritania, Yemen, Arab Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen and Kuwait.

He clarified that toxic wastes constitute a danger to the safety and security of the environment and is threatening air, water and soil of a great number of Third World countries.

He stressed that there are some developing countries who agree to bury these wastes on their own lands for cash. He said, we cannot ignore that there are national and international efforts to minimize the effects of toxic wastes.

Meanwhile, Sarawi said the GCC countries future and comprehensive view towards toxic wastes concentrated on the long term plans aiming at creating viable formulas for the disposal of toxic wastes, adding that this task entails close co-operation and concerted efforts of all authorities.

He added that the spread of toxic waste phenomenon is threatening the future generations particularly in relations to the utilisation of land. He called on the GCC countries to realise

optimum benefit from natural resources technology and commented that the Islamic religion had urged preserving the safety of the environment in view of its importance to human beings.

Speaking of the ozone issue, Sarawi said that this is one of the perils that threaten the environment particularly in industrial countries. He clarified that the ozone hole constitutes a major cause for climatic changes resulting from environmental contamination. He added that Kuwait is playing a significant role towards concluding international agreements on this vital world-wide issue.

In conclusion, the official lauded the scheme followed by Kuwait Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources which aims at projecting the bright face of the environment represented by the afforestation project.



Lipton's Gold Rush — First draw announced

The draw on Lipton Gold Rush prizes was conducted on the 16th Dec 1989 at Sheraton Hotel, under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce represented by Mohammad Abdul Aziz Al Faraj. In all prizes worth one Kilogram gold were announced. The first prize Lucky Winner of 1/2 kilo of gold was Ahmad Ismail Tufic Mohammad. Other valuable prizes were: 2 prizes 100 g gold, 6 prizes 50 g gold, 10 prizes Nonstop Tea Sets. Two further Lipton Gold Rush Draws are to take place on 8th January and 29th January 1990 respectively, in which 2 kilos of pure gold and other valuable prizes will await the lucky winners. Picture shows (from L — R) C.M. Sahn, Lipton's Area Sales Manager, the winner Ahmad Ismail Tufic Mohammad and Abdulla Abu Issa, Sales Manager of M/s. Mohammad Abdul Rahman Al Bahar.

Joint effort will help development: Kamel

Awareness programmes to be televised

SOCIAL development can only succeed with the co-operation and collective efforts of the states of the area and the joint Gulf projects are the ideal method of achieving the objectives, Kamel Al Saleh, secretary general of the follow up bureau of the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs and Labour in the Arab Gulf states said.

Al Saleh pointed out that the council succeeded in producing a television and radio series entitled "Dirfutu." the programme is

intended to guide and enlighten citizens on the social and labour problems in the area and will be televised to the states of the area shortly.

The programme focuses on issues such as delinquency of juveniles, divorce, role of women in development plans, effects of foreign maids and babysitters on Arab families, role of co-operative movement, handicapped people, professional education, applications of labour legislations, problems of youths, social security, labour

and social services, professional health and safety and dangers of the spread of illegal narcotics.

Directory

He pointed out that Arab Gulf unified directory for professional classification will play an important role in planning and organising manpower and developing training programmes beside setting up policies of wages and employment. The directory includes classification of all 1,891 categories of jobs and professions in

states of the area.

Salah pointed out that a total of 150 studies on labour and social questions were made by the councils besides field surveys. These studies focused on several questions specially the effects of foreign maids and babysitters on Arab families in the Gulf area, needs of families in local societies and the local classification in these states. The council organises a periodic competition in social research about different social questions.

Amir, Shangkun hold first round of talks

KUWAIT, Dec 25 (Kuna): Chinese President Yang Shangkun today called on His Highness the Amir at Bayan Palace where the two leaders held the first round of official talks.

Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Khaled Al Ahmed Al Sabah said that discussions centred on the latest developments in international relations.

Talks also centred on the Middle East situation and Chinese efforts to solve the Palestinian question in addition to international efforts to reach a just peace settlement between Iraq and Iran.

Sheikh Khaled said that discussions between the

two leaders also tackled bilateral relations and ways of boosting them in various fields.

Later in the day, Sheikh Jaber hosted a dinner banquet in honour of the visiting guest and the accompanying delegation.

The first session of the Chinese-Kuwaiti Joint Commission for Technical and Economic Co-operation and Trade Exchange also wound up its meeting today.

Minutes of the meeting were signed by Kuwaiti Finance Minister Jassim Mohammed Al Kharafi and his Chinese counterpart Wang Bingqian.

Kuwait facing industrial problem: IBK chairman

Local market saturated with foreign goods

THE local market is being saturated with goods from different countries including the GCC members and this is reflected in the price of imported items which equal the cost of their raw constituent material, Saleh Al Yousef, Chairman of the board of the Industrial Bank of Kuwait (IBK) said.

He told a local daily that local factories are also the target of counter-bias, whereby the specifications and conditions laid down for local tenders are manipulated so as to ensure their failure to take part in the bidding.

He stressed the need for adopting a new understanding of the value-added clause to provide industrial protection; and meet the existing industrial and economic situation in the country and to avoid continuous aid to the industrial sector lest this result in mounting economic pressure.

He proposed that industrial aid should be available during the first five years and then should slowly diminish to provide local industries the opportunity of self-development.

He laid heavy emphasis on the need to accord added attention to exporting industries, pointing out that the local and Gulf markets are small and that the refrainment by some Arab countries to

make necessary payments is the main reason for the lack of any attempts at establishing a local exporting company including the disinclination of banks to finance national exports.

Yousef said that the IBK has commenced a study on a number of industrial projects, which would be implemented over the forthcoming years.

Yousef pointed out that efforts must earnestly be exerted to encourage citizens to enter the industrial sector, within the limits of the context of the value-added concept in order that each factory with the highest number of Kuwaiti citizens would be more qualified to a higher protection percentage.

This will give local companies the impetus and incentive to encourage the involvement of citizens in their industrial activities, which would, among other things, offer fresh graduates plenty of job opportunities, he added.

He stressed the value-added concept must be flexible enough to lend itself to meeting the requirements of different industries, particularly those industries which could cover full capacity of the local market. Therefore, they have the right to greater share of protection for a limited period.

He underlined the importance of agreeing on a unified approach of the value-added concept between the GCC members, as the existing varying levels of protection led by unhealthy competition whereby one industry would thrive at the expense of another.

He said that the value-added concept was part of the policies of their funds and liquidity to support exporting industries, but the problem rested with the need to guarantee the ability of importers to pay up their loans, lest this would cause the private sector to turn away from entering into this sphere.

Encouragement

There is an effort towards setting up regional and local establishments to encourage and finance the establishment and development of exporting industrial enterprises, such as the national agency currently run by the Kuwait Finance House, Yousef said.

He added that there is also a plan by the Arab Fund to set up a special agency to promote inter-Arab trading and similar bodies would be established for the purpose of co-operation and co-ordinations with these national facilities.

He described as a mistake the

attempt by some factories at undertaking marketing activities of their products and said it is extremely important to set up special agencies to run marketing activities which are characterised by high-cost and need to be based on a scientific well-studied marketing approach.

Kuwait has the needed funds and liquidity to support exporting industries, but the problem rested with the need to guarantee the ability of importers to pay up their loans, lest this would cause the private sector to turn away from entering into this sphere.

Meanwhile, a report issued by the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consultations (GOIC) said that states of the area had established basic industrial projects and offered more facilities for the private sector during the years of prosperity. But, presently, due to the stagnation and the sharp reduction of national incomes, the private sector is required to carry out this role by itself in relation to the new industries and investments.

The report pointed out that the Third Industrial Conference in the Arab Gulf states will open in Muscat today (26-12-89). Discussions will focus on ways to practice a basic role by private sector in industrial development.

Pick out the best of the catch at Al Bander's



At last, a seafood restaurant that's right by the sea. Come, pick your own fresh vegetable, tiger prawn, juicy crab, Fruits de Mer, live lobster... or any other fish you fancy. All cooked to pamper every palate:

- Non-Members are welcome too.
- Complimentary coach service for 4 guests or more.
- Valet Parking facilities.
- Call 701201 for lunch and dinner reservations.

At the Fish Market Restaurant, we leave nothing to chance. Not even the catch of the day.

Maid recruiters seek licences

Law requested

OWNERS of offices involved in bringing in maids into the country have called for the issuance of a law delineating their responsibilities, rights and duties in addition to preserving the rights of the office employees and labour. This will tend to organise the labour sector in the country, they added.

They pointed out that companies should be clearly instructed on the terms and conditions agreed to by the employee and labour. Further, labour should be provided with adequate housing, medical treatment and that salaries should be paid in full to be in keeping with the terms of the agreement signed between the employee and the labour.

These statements were made during a number of interviews held by a local daily with owners of labour offices to shed light on the nature of their job functions and the problems they encounter.

Suhail Al Suhaili stated that in general, most of their job as a general services office is to bring maids for families. In the past his office has also conducted several petitions to bring cleaning labourers to a number of establishments. He added that he preferred to deal with the bringing in labour instead of maids because it is easier than dealing with individual cases.

He pointed out that business deals are conducted by receiving offers from labour offices outside Kuwait. He said his representative usually travel abroad to take a look at these offices to ascertain their capabilities and establish good relations with them.

He added that contracts signed between labour/offices and parties are formed in accordance with labour laws organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

Suhail said that there are several problems mainly when dealing with many types of people, particularly those who require special treatment. He added that sometimes employers refer their cases to police stations due to lack of understanding. Employers should realize the fact that a maid for instance requires time to cope with new society traditions.

He stated that most office owners share with him same problem caused by not having so far a law which gives them the opportunity to practice their jobs with licence. He said that these offices serve all sectors without exceptions and that officials comprehend their responsibilities and role. He called upon officials to provide offices such as his with job security following the steps of neighbouring countries.

Munther Khader Ibrahim stated that they specialise in bringing labour to companies or establishments as also maids. He pointed out that such manpower is mainly brought from East Asian countries. He pointed out that their job important in choosing the most ideal manpower to suit requirements.

Consumption of brackish water peaks during summer months from May to September and total consumption of this water amounted to 12 billion gallons during the year 1988. The official said.

He estimated commission paid to local offices by their overseas agent reach \$300 for each labourer and said that often an average of 10 to 40 labourers are brought.

In case of house maids, he indicated that they pay outside offices KD80 for airplane tickets and added that they don't deal with Filipinos in bringing maids because maids from that country cause problems and have special contracts.

He said that even during seasons when shrimp fishing is banned, the local catch is sufficient to cater to the needs of the market, if the shrimps caught during season were well frozen. This, basically, requires the active involvement and support of the government, the official said.

Meanwhile, Hayat has denied that national fishermen destroy the marine environment with fishing nets stating that these fishermen use certain nets to fish limited kinds of fish and shrimps only.

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EDITORIALS

ARAB TIMES
Thought for today

THAT man is richest whose pleasures are the cheapest
—Henry David Thoreau, US writer (1817-1862).

OPINION**The lesson of Romania**

THE proverb says "When your neighbour shaves his beard you should prepare your beard also for shaving." Similarly many leaders should prepare themselves to face the same fate as the deposed Romanian leader. People of many countries will certainly learn from the Romanian lesson and will severely punish their leaders.

In the Middle East, there are many such regimes who have oppressed their people, destroyed their economic resources, suppressed their personal freedom and turned their countries into beggars seeking gifts and aid from others.

Leaders of these countries behave in the same manner as the deposed Romanian leader. They have amassed huge accounts abroad, mostly in the names of brothers, relatives, supporters, security personnel and a bunch of submissive merchants who facilitate the smuggling of funds.

Traditional slogans of honesty, dignity, progressive ideas, liberation, national independence, fighting the enemy, and others, are simply intended to mislead the people.

All who differ with these regimes are tortured with fire, electric shocks and other innovations at the hands of the secret police. Thus, electricity flew in their bodies, perhaps before it reached their villages.

People have woken up and punishment will follow at a time when escape for these rulers will be difficult. Present international law does not permit such leaders to flee after destroying their countries. Even funds have now been frozen in what was once called secret Swiss accounts.

These leaders should always remember that honesty and dignity in ruling, providing the people with their personal and public freedom and spending the peoples' funds for the people, are the only right attitude. There are countries in the Middle East that would have become the richest countries in the region and would by now be exporting to other countries instead of waiting for charity from others, had they had a clean honest regime running their affairs.

But it seems that the current developments in East Europe and Romania are intended to be the great example and lesson for other peoples. Allah's ability can do more than that. The oppressive regimes will certainly receive what they deserve of punishment. Souls of thousands of persons who died in jails are now certainly crying and searching for their revenge. It looks that the time of punishment is fast approaching. Though the events in Romania are so painful, but it is the lesson.

Ahmed Al Jarallah

New world shaping up

THE revolutions sweeping Eastern Europe have become revolutions of the mind. Each government that falls makes people world-wide rethink 40 years of competing ideologies and ponder what, if anything, will replace the cold war.

Filling the vacuum could be new concern about social, economic and environmental issues, historians and sociologists say. But there could also be a resurgence of old conflicts or growing isolationism.

The cold war has "organized the world for us. It's defined friends and foes, burdens and dangers. It's been a very powerful matrix for sorting out all the things that go on in the world. If it's removed the world is bound to look more chaotic," said Michael Mandelbaum, an East-West specialist at the Council of Foreign Relations.

In addition, "the East-West confrontation has been the centrepiece of foreign policy," Mandelbaum said. "I think what we're facing now is kind of doughnut foreign policy with the centre disappearing, and I think it's unclear what will replace the East-West conflict."

Spurred by Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet reforms, Poland, Hungary, West Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, in rapid succession, have begun moving away from traditional communist systems to greater democracy and market-orientation.

Questions about whether Gorbachev will succeed at home, the European Common Market of 1992 and possible German reunification add to the complexity and uncertainty for policy-makers.

The post-cold war era will be "more integrated, more motley," said Daniel Markovits, a political science professor at Boston University and senior associate at Harvard's Centre for European Studies.

TODAY IN HISTORY

1793 — French victory at Weissenburg forces allies to retreat across Rhine River.

1805 — Peace of Pressburg is signed between France and Austria.

1825 — Russian Army uprising is crushed.

1827 — Turkey's Sultan Mohammed II rejects right of allies to mediate in war with Greece.

1901 — Completion of Uganda railway from Mombassa to Lake Victoria.

1938 — Declaration of Peru against all foreign intervention is approved by Pan American conference.

1941 — US declares Manila an open city in the Philippines in World War II.

1961 — United Nations officials charge that northern Rhodesia was aiding secessionist Congo province of Katanga in its fight against UN forces.

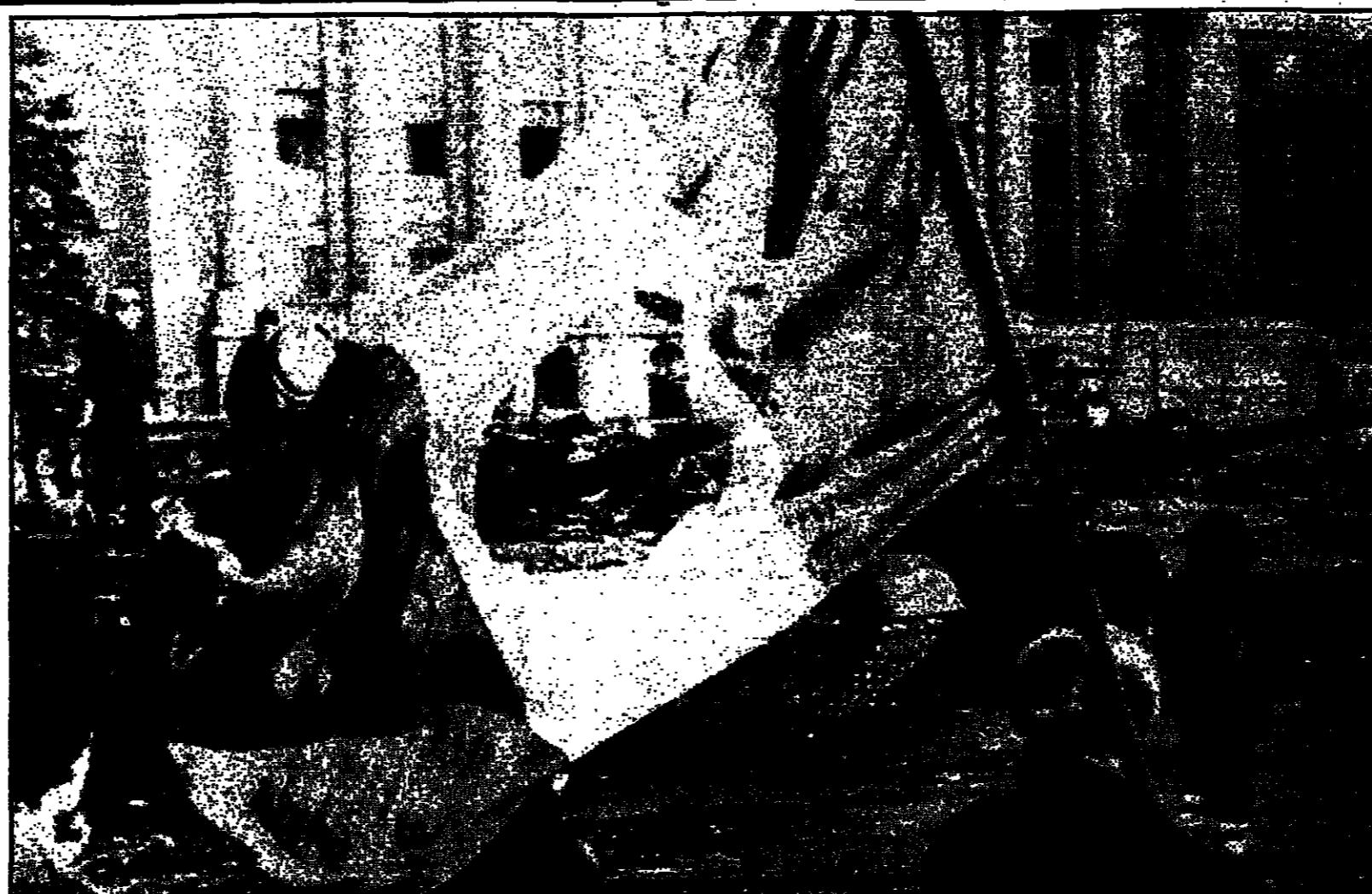
1962 — Eight refugees from deep inside East Germany escape to West Berlin by crashing bus through barriers at border checkpoint.

1971 — Sixteen US veterans war seize Statue of Liberty in New York harbour to dramatize their anti-war stand.

1974 — Soviet Union sends unmanned scientific station into earth orbit.

1977 — Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egypt's President Anwar Sadat conclude meeting at Ismailia, Egypt, without agreeing on Middle East issues.

1988 — Chairman Yasser Arafat of Palestine Liberation Organization concludes three-day meeting with top aides in Baghdad focusing on Middle East peace process.



A man carries a Romanian flag, with the communist sign cut out as he passes some tanks in front of the palace of former president Ceausescu in Bucharest on Saturday. (Reuter wirephoto)

Crash landing for Ceausescu**Bloodiest phase in the fall of communism**

WASHINGTON, (AP): The ouster of Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu is proving to be the bloodiest phase so far in the revolution that has ended all six hardline communist governments in the Warsaw Pact since the summer.

Security forces loyal to Ceausescu battled rebels through the weekend, in contrast to neighbouring nations, where reform forces have come to power relatively peacefully.

The conflict was part of the heritage of Ceausescu's quarter-century rule, which virtually destroyed the nation's economic and political fabric, and makes Romania's future cloudier than those of other Eastern European countries emerging from hardline rule.

"The fact that Ceausescu is gone in itself is fantastic, but we are not out of the woods by any means," said Julian Geran Pilon, who was born in Romania and now directs the National Forum Foundation, a conservative Washington lobbying group.

When the fighting ends, Romania promises to be in worse shape than the other Soviet satellites.

"Romania more than any other of the Eastern European countries needs direct Western help in the form of food," said James Brown, a specialist on the region at the Rand Corp. in Santa Monica, California.

Winters can be harsh in Romania and the land is desperately short of food and heating fuel, Brown said.

Moreover, thousands of Romanians reportedly died in fighting before and after Ceausescu's ouster.

in contrast to the nearly bloodless revolutions in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary.

Ceausescu was replaced by the National Salvation Committee transitional government, composed of civilian and military leaders, some of whom had fallen into disfavour or been jailed under the old rule.

The leading figure in the new government appeared to be former Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu, 73, who has been under house arrest in Bucharest since he and seven other top communists wrote a highly critical letter to Ceausescu last March.

Another civilian in the leadership was Ion Iliescu, who was ousted as secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee in 1971 and is reputed to be a strong advocate of reforms. Iliescu attended Moscow State University with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, according to Mr. Pilon and another Romanian emigre, Michael Radu.

"He is the closest you can get to a reformer of the Gorbachev type in the Romanian Communist Party," said Radu, who is now a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a think tank in Philadelphia.

Manescu already has promised elections, although it was not clear when or under what circumstances they would be held, or who would run.

Ceausescu eliminated not only the two former political parties, the National Liberals and the

Peasants, but rival communists as well, said Petre Nicolae, a former Romanian Communist Party member who emigrated in 1981.

Equally pressing for the new government will be the economic recovery of Romania, which "is by natural resources the richest in Eastern Europe, but under Ceausescu developed the worst economy, with the lowest living standard," said Brown. Only Albania, a communist nation not allied with Moscow, is poorer, he said.

Ceausescu collectivized once-productive Romanian farms, driving peasants into the cities to work on heavy industry, which he was simultaneously building, said Radu.

Romania was forced to import raw materials for its industry, however, building up a huge foreign debt that Ceausescu paid off through austerity that forced the people to live on a "semi-starvation diet" with inadequate heating oil and electricity, said Radu.

Another obstacle may impede Romania's course to recovery, said Brown and Pilon.

The population of the neighbouring Soviet Republic of Moldavia is 65 percent ethnic Romanians, and the republic, one of the 15 in the Soviet Union, was seized by the Soviet Union in one of the Nazi-Stalin pacts at the dawn of World War II.

Any popular movement to reunite Romania and Moldavia could cause friction with the Soviet Union.

Fortress collapses from its failures

MOSCOW, (AP): It was the fortress Stalin built, from the Baltic to the Adriatic. It held some 100 million human souls. Two days ago its last bastion fell, stormed by hundreds of thousands of Romanians enraged by Nicolae Ceausescu's tyranny.

A new order in Europe, in the making through 40 years of repression and economic failure, suddenly is being born with the blessing and connivance of President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In the 19th century, another European who thought in continent-wide terms, the French Emperor Napoleon, dreamed of a "continental system" to integrate the territory he conquered from Spain to Russia. The philosophical father of communism, Karl Marx, predicted a proletarian revolution would sweep Europe.

Now Gorbachev, one of Marx's ideological heirs, preaches the creation of a "common European home" where after years of Kremlin domination, the nations of Eastern Europe will be virtually free to pursue policies they set themselves.

The fundamental changes of 1989 mean that the five east bloc countries must set up new governments, reorganise economies and begin to work out what kinds of relations they will have with the Soviet Union, what ties will be forged with Western countries. The events in East Germany raise the special issue of a reunified Germany in the heart of Europe.

Gorbachev's vision supplants agreements by the World War II allies that led to the continent's division into East and West after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

For more than four decades, with the Red Army serving as its gendarme, Soviet-style communism reigned in Eastern Europe from the Bug River on the Soviet-Polish border to the German city of Weimar, where Bach wrote his great fugues. Europe seemed immutably divided into socialist and capitalist camps.

The West set up Nato to deal with any military threat, and the members of the communist bloc formed the Warsaw Pact.

The schism of Europe had its hated symbol, the Berlin Wall. It made concrete Winston Churchill's alarmed rhetoric in 1946 when he told students at a small college in Missouri that "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent."

True, there were rips in that curtain — when Yugoslavia in the late 1940s and later Albania successfully rebelled against Moscow's domination. But the most stunning changes awaited the advent of Gorbachev and the whirlwind year of 1989.

Beginning in August, hardline regimes were ousted in Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and finally Romania. Roman Catholic Tadeusz Mazowiecki became Poland's first non-communist premier since World War II.

Czechoslovakia's new government is no longer communist-dominated, and Hungary's parliament has approved democratic, multiparty elections next year.

In Berlin, millions of East Germans have poured through newly cut breaches in the wall, personifying the growing symbiosis between East and West.

Since becoming Soviet leader in March 1985, Gorbachev has repudiated Stalin's heritage of political terror and centralised control. But it was only this year he showed how far he was willing to deviate from past Kremlin practice in dealing with the allies, and to risk Soviet geopolitical gains.

Victory in World War II over Nazi Germany brought the Red Army into the heart of Central Europe, where it occupied the capitals of 10 countries, from Berlin to Sofia. It retook the Polish Ukraine, seized Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia, and forced Romania to relinquish Bessarabia.

That triumph erased the consequences of 1917, when the Bolsheviks were forced to swap territory for peace, and restored the Western facade of Russia that from Peter the Great to Alexander I, the Czars had built up over two centuries.

The communists were numerically few in postwar Central Europe, but their weakness was compensated by the prestige they gained as leaders of the anti-Nazi resistance, and by the tanks and regiments of the occupying Red Army. To augment their influence, communists opted to create coalitions.

In the new governments, Moscow's allies settled for a few ministries, but chose them with care: Interior, police, justice. They gained access to dossiers and forces they could use later to compromise and purge their political enemies.

Coalitions of democratic forces had reigned in liberated Eastern Europe in 1945. By 1949, the Soviet Union, which had no allies before the war, was flanked by eight "people's democracies," and many communists predicted the Red tide would keep rising.

Only Yugoslavia shook free of the Soviets, with leader Josip Broz Tito accusing Stalin of camouflaging colonialist aims with Marxist-Leninist slogans.

"This subjugation of small peoples has only one goal," Tito declared. "And this goal is certainly not world revolution, but world hegemony, the domination of the USSR, an imperialist power, over other peoples."

In 1947, a meeting assembled representatives of the "people's democracies" in Poland, and the Komintern was created to supervise ideological subjugation of the Kremlin's satellites. The next year, it excommunicated Tito for "deviationism."

The smallest of the Balkan countries, Albania, broke with the Soviet Union in 1961, ironically because it accused Soviet leaders of betraying the ideals of Stalin. It remains a virtual hermit state.

Starting with Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviets who succeeded Stalin allowed Eastern Europe countries more leeway in setting domestic policy. But until Gorbachev, they continued to insist on being the final arbiters of socialist orthodoxy.

This month the Soviets admitted the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia ordered by Leonid Brezhnev's Kremlin had been a mistake.

Though hundreds of people were reported killed in the struggle between pro-Ceausescu and reform forces in Romania, the Soviets insisted they would not intervene militarily to aid the reformers because of the bitter lessons learned from the past.

ARAB TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1989

Letters to the editor**Operation Just Cause**

SIR: Shortly after midnight, on Tuesday, Dec 19, US troops carried out a multi-front invasion against Panamanian dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega's military strongholds.

US President Bush, in his address to the nation, at 7:20 am, EST, stated the objectives of the invasion, namely:

1. To safeguard the lives of 35,000 American citizens currently residing in Panama and recently threatened by the general.

2. To combat drug trafficking, by apprehending Noriega who has been indicted in Florida, on a lengthy list of drug trafficking and money laundering charges.

3. To protect the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaty. There have been numerous reports indicating General Noriega was considering blocking the mentioned US-built and operated international waterway.

4. To defend democracy in the Isthmus of Panama, which General Noriega has systematically usurped by nullifying that country's national elections in May, after it became apparent the opposition had legitimately won.

International observers, among them former president Jimmy Carter have repeatedly stated, and polls taken at election time confirmed that General Noriega had lost by a margin of 3-1. The actual election results were never officially announced. Ultimately, Noriega nullified the elections, brutally suppressed all opposition to his rule, through his Brigades de Dignidad (Dignity Brigades), which amounted to government-armed packs of civilian thugs hired to conduct a campaign of terror on the Panamanian populace.

Finally, on Friday, Dec 15, General Noriega declared himself "maximum leader of Panama" and his country in a state of war with the US.

Some of us have read the alarming casualty figures of Operation Just Cause, and are deeply immersed in sorrow because of these dreadful but inevitable casualties of a war whose unprecedented impact to the entire international community is yet to be perceived. In spite of this tragedy, President Bush's efforts must be praised as they have enabled the democratically elected government of Panama, headed by President Guillermo Endara, First Vice-President Ricardo Ortega Calderon, and Second Vice-President Guillermo Ford, to assume the rightful leadership of the republic.

To this newly formed government, best wishes! Setting aside praises and good wishes, Operation Just Cause must be objectively analysed in terms of:

1. Its international legality.

According to international laws, military action is allowed in self-defence when one nation declares war on another. Panama's de facto ruler, General Noriega declared a state of war against the US on Friday, Dec 15. Furthermore, the Panama Canal Treaty though stipulating that the US does not have the right to intervene in the internal affairs of Panama, accompanying legislation enacted in 1977, states that the US does reserve the right to defend and secure the canal in time of war or when the president considers war imminent.

Setting aside praises and good wishes, Operation Just Cause must be objectively analysed in terms of:

2. Its goals achieved and how these can be sustained in future.

Obviously, the primary objective of Operation Just Cause was to oust Noriega from power, seize him and bring him to justice for various indictments in Florida. Reports now indicate the general has sought refuge at the Vatican embassy in Panama. As long as he is around, he will continue to be a powerfully destabilising element to a newly formed government lacking its own military muscle and to whom few if any Panamanian military leaders have pledged loyalty.

Furthermore, Noriega's military machinery is accustomed to years of bribery and corruption piled mostly with the drug dollars. Therefore, the military system will have to be purged from the bottom-up, or else Operation Just Cause would be known to future generations as Operation Musical Chair, in which one corrupt dictator substituted another.

Inevitably, to maintain the fledgling new government, the US may be expected to extend its presence and length of stay in order to establish law and order. This will undoubtedly further deteriorate already strained love-hate

MIDEAST

Quiet Xmas in Bethlehem

Israel troops patrol town

OCCUPIED BETHLEHEM, Occupied West Bank, Dec 25, (Agencies): Christian worshippers from around the world filled the St. Catherine's church in Bethlehem to hear the midnight Christmas mass and a sermon promising victory for the Palestinian uprising.

The mass, held near the grotto where Christ was born, was led by the Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, the first Arab appointed to that post.

Sabbah, clad in a festive white and red garment, was surrounded by monks in black robes and choir boys in white. In the audience, dignitaries mixed with the worshippers, many of whom joined in the singing.

The guests of honour included ambassadors or consuls of France, Italy, Belgium and Spain, Bethlehem's mayor, Elias Freij, Jerusalem mayor, Teddy Kollek and Brig. Gen. Shmuel Erez, head of the Israeli military government in the West Bank.

"How can we celebrate Christmas with what we are going through, with our sons killed or in prison. Despite all that is happening to you, you will win, in the end you will win. The love in your hearts will serve you. Love God, and love the people who mistreat you," was Sabbah's message to his Palestinian brethren.

Sabbah, who supports the Palestinian independence demands, also addressed the Jews in his Arabic-language sermon, saying:

"To the Jewish people, we say the same thing: Love and forgiveness. Love will give you security. I call on the believers of the world to join us in prayer for justice and peace. Don't forget Jerusalem and its warring people, the Palestinians and the Jews."

By the end of the evening, there were well over 1,000 people in the church and the Manger Square outside.

Earlier Sunday, Palestinians boycotted Christmas Eve festivities in Bethlehem, and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu warned there was "no hope" for peace in the Holy Land without a Palestinian state.

Elsewhere in the occupied lands, 17 Palestinians were wounded in clashes with Israeli soldiers. Eight were hurt in four separate clashes in the Gaza Strip and nine others were wounded in the "Nabulus" area of the West Bank.

Near the West Bank village of Zeita, the body of a 60-year-old Jew, Moshe Ephraim, was found inside a car with a rope around the neck, police officials said. Police and paramilitary border police troops immediately launched searches in the area.

Police officials said they were checking whether Ephraim's death was a nationalist or a criminal killing, but did not rule out the possibility of a suicide.

Hundreds of Israeli soldiers patrolled Bethlehem while a sprinkling of tourists visited the somber, shuttered town of Jesus' birth.

Despite a call by the Palestinian uprising's underground leadership for stores in the occupied territories to remain open all day for the holiday, Bethlehem shopkeepers kept their shops closed in observance of a strike ordered by local activists. Only children hawking sodas and trinkets, and a few street vendors were open for business.

Hours before five foreign choirs performed in Manger Square Christmas Eve, Bethlehem streets were quiet and devoid of the usual wide display of lights and decorations raised to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Only a small decorative cross and star stood atop the Church of the Nativity complex. A shooting star surrounded by a few yellow and white lights adorned a tree near the Manger Square police station.

Soldiers and police lined the main street of Bethlehem in Paris every 200 yards, while patrols kept watch from rooftops in the square. All visitors to Manger Square also passed through metal detectors and were frisked before they were allowed to enter.

"It's war. It's not Christmas," said one 35-year-old Christian



An Israeli border policeman lets a Palestinian child enter Manger Square in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem after checking the youth with a metal detector. (Reuter wirephoto)

Church evacuated after bomb threat

Unjust will 'bite dust': Tutu

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 25, (Agencies): More than 500 worshippers were evacuated after a bomb threat at a Jerusalem church where visiting South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu was leading Christmas midnight mass early today, church officials said.

Tutu, paying a Christmas visit to the Holy Land, had just finished his sermon when church leaders asked the congregation to leave.

They gave no immediate explanation and churchgoers left quietly. The service resumed in the courtyard of the Anglican church in East Jerusalem and officials announced there had been a bomb threat.

Referring to the threat, Tutu told Reuters: "We are in that kind of world." Tutu told Christians worshippers in Jerusalem today that unjust governments would "bite the dust."

Tutu has repeatedly championed Palestinian independence during his Christmas pilgrimage to the Holy land.

"All rulers, unless they rule according to God's law, they will bite the dust," he told 500 mostly foreign worshippers at St George's Anglican church in Arab East Jerusalem.

"This is the God who overthrows the powerful. God is here as they stand on you and shoot you and kill you," he said in a fiery sermon.

He said the events of the last few weeks in Eastern Europe and the warmer relations between the United States and Soviet Union were amazing and wondrous. The ability of his Anglican church in South Africa to lead both whites and blacks in a racially segregated country also was a sign of hope, Tutu said, hinting to a future in which Arabs and Israelis would reconcile themselves.

"We know (in South Africa) that oppressors will bite the dust and will do so ignominiously," Tutu said. "We know that because of the babe of Bethlehem."

There will come a time, Tutu said, "when Jews and Arabs can hold hands together, will recognize their own humanity, each living in sovereign state of their choosing as neighbours... and (they) will say 'welcome brother and welcome sister.'

Tutu had earlier told Palestinians at Shepherds Field in Beit Sahour in the occupied West Bank that God sided with those who were brutalised and oppressed.

"We support the struggle of Palestinian people for nationhood but we say also your brothers and sisters, the Jews, have a right to their independent state as well," he said at the site where shepherds traditionally heard first of Jesus' birth.

Palestinian, sitting in the doorway of his home a few steps from Manger Square's Church of the Nativity complex. Just look at all the soldiers around on the rooftops everywhere."

More tourists began trickling in to Manger Square by nightfall, sporting white and pink carnations given them by Israeli soldiers and listening to choirs singing Christmas hymns. Despite the more festive atmosphere than earlier in the day, the number of visitors only reached an estimated 1,500.

Iran releases 50 disabled prisoners of war

GCC efforts futile unless Tehran is consulted

NICOSIA, Dec 25, (AP): Iran released 50 ailing or disabled Iraqi prisoners of war today to representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Tehran radio reported.

It was not clear whether Iraq would reciprocate and release some of the Iranian POWs it holds. The radio said the prisoners were released in Tehran to the Red Cross for later repatriation.

Tehran Radio, quoted a Foreign Ministry statement as saying the 50 were being freed "on humanitarian grounds and (in response to) a request from the UN secretary-general." It did not say when secretary-general Javier Perez de Cuellar made the appeal. But Baghdad last week sent a memorandum to the UN

chief expressing concern over POWs in Iran after the ICRC report on Dec 6 that 22 Iraqis have died in jail.

The deaths were attributed to "heart attacks and relevant diseases," but the Iraqi media suggested the prisoners might have been tortured to death.

The Red Cross has registered some 50,000 prisoners held by Iran and more than 19,000 in Iraqi camps. But United Nations officials and diplomats estimate the two sides hold around 100,000 POWs between them.

The Red Cross secured an agreement to repatriate all prisoners immediately after a UN ceasefire halted the Gulf war on Aug. 20, 1988.

But the deal collapsed after the repatriation of only 400 disabled and wounded prisoners with both sides accusing each other of falsifying the number of captives who were seeking asylum.

The ICRC's Middle East chief, Angelo Gnadinger, visited Tehran and Baghdad last week seeking a swap of the remaining 1,000 wounded and disabled POWs held by both sides.

The six-member Gulf Co-operation Council's efforts to promote an Iran-Iraq peace treaty to formally end the Gulf war will be futile unless Tehran is consulted, the official Islamic Republic News Agency said yesterday.

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 25. (Agencies): An American doctor said today an autopsy on a Palestinian who died in the interrogation room of an Israeli prison showed that he was killed by blows to the abdomen.

In the occupied Gaza Strip, security sources said Israeli troops were on alert for recent street protests in memory of Khalid Al Sheikh Ali, 27, a Palestinian activist who died last Tuesday in Gaza prison.

His family accused interrogators for Israel's Shin Bet secret police of torturing him to death. Palestinians said he was the third prisoner in six months to die in the Gaza interrogation centre they call the "slaughter room".

"We both agree that he died of multiple blows to the abdomen causing internal bleeding," said Dr Michael Baden, forensic sciences director for New York state

police, who took part in the autopsy by Dr Jehudi Hiss, Israel's chief medical examiner.

Baden, former chief medical examiner of New York City, said there was also evidence of injuries to the legs, back and testicles.

Palestinians have widely accused Shin Bet of torturing prisoners in its efforts to suppress the two-year-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

A 1987 judicial commission report approved its use of limited physical and psychological pressure during interrogations.

Baden said he and Hiss interviewed Al Sheikh Ali's interrogators in Gaza after the six-hour autopsy yesterday. They said he became ill during questioning but denied using force.

"I would hope there would be a full and thorough investigation and something

good would come out of this to prevent this from happening in the future," Baden said.

"We had 300 deaths in jails in New York state last year. That doesn't mean all of them were sinister. Some of them were. I think in this instance somebody did something wrong."

Baden, recruited on behalf of the family by the Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights and the Arab human rights group Al Haq, said state prosecutors would investigate the case.

He said the wounds were inflicted after Al Sheikh Ali's arrest on Dec 7.

Al Sheikh Ali's family said troops beat him during a search of his Gaza house that uncovered axes, masks, propaganda and a black uniform of the militant group Islamic Jihad.

On Sunday, Israel's Supreme Court ruled an army colonel must stand trial on

charges of ordering soldiers to break the bones of Palestinian prisoners.

Reserve Colonel Yehuda Meir, former commander of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, would be the highest-ranking officer to face a court martial since the revolt erupted in December 1987.

In the Gaza Strip's Jubata refugee camp, troops shot and wounded seven Palestinians during clashes today, hospital officials said.

Justice Yaakov Kadmi wrote that Meir's orders to beat bound Palestinian detainees stands in complete contradiction to the basic foundations of the nation of Israel."

Meir accused of ordering troops to beat and break the legs of 20 bound and gagged Palestinians from the nearby towns of Hawara and Beita.

MIDEAST BRIEFS

Pray for hostages

BEIRUT, Dec 25, (Reuters): Families and friends of eight Americans held hostage in Lebanon sent Christmas greetings in messages published by Beirut newspapers today.

The sister of Terry Anderson, the longest-held foreign captive, said she was praying for a Christmas miracle.

"Despite having no valid reason for believing that you might celebrate this season as a free man, my faith prompts me to pray very hard for a Christmas miracle," Peggy Say told him in a message published in English by An Nahar daily.

Anderson, Middle East bureau chief of the Associated Press, was abducted on March 16, 1985.

"We deeply regret that we have been unable to find the key that will unlock the door to freedom. We will never stop trying," Say said.

An Nahar also published a message to all eight US hostages from "the journalists committee to free Terry Anderson."

Drivers on strike

ALGIERS, Dec 25, (Reuters): Train and taxi drivers were on strike in Algiers today to press demands for higher pay and better fringe benefits.

The train drivers demanded a revision of pay scales, while taxi drivers said in a leaflet distributed on the streets that their main complaint was they could not get tyres or spare parts for their vehicles.

The director of state railways said a skeleton service of night trains would be organised to serve universities and factories in suburban areas.

Abdel-Meguid in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Dec 25, (AP): President Saddam Hussein conferred today with Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid who flew in earlier in the day for talks on Arab issues, the official Iraqi news agency reported.

It said that during the meeting, Abdel-Meguid handed Saddam a message from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, dealing with "bilateral issues, Arab issues and the Arab Co-operation Council."

It gave no other details of the meeting, also attended by Iraqi Foreign Minister Tareq Aziz.

Azziz and Abdel-Meguid held a separate meeting before calling on the President.

Bilateral visits among officials of the four-nation Arab Co-operation Council have increased recently as the alliance prepares for a fourth summit conference on its first anniversary.

Rocard in Cairo

CAIRO, Dec 25, (Reuters): French Prime Minister Michel Rocard arrived in Cairo today for Middle East peace talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak before heading south to the ancient royal city of Thebes.

Rocard, accompanied by his wife, made no statement at Cairo airport before he was driven to El-Ittihadiya presidential palace. Presidential sources said Rocard and Mubarak would continue talks over lunch.

Rocard will spend the rest of Christmas day touring the Giza pyramids and visiting the Egyptian museum, which is crammed with Pharaonic monuments.

His one-day trip to Cairo will be followed by a week-long unofficial visit to the tombs and temples in Luxor — ancient Thebes — and Aswan in upper Egypt.

1,800 troops killed

NAIROBI, Dec 25, (Reuters): Rebels in northern Ethiopia said today they had killed more than 1,800 government troops in three days of heavy fighting around the town of Debre Tabor in Gondar province, beating off an army offensive.

The clandestine radio of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) said the rebels also captured 45 soldiers.

Front forces resisted an attempt by government troops to break out of Debre Tabor and attack rebel positions around Nefas Mewchar, 80 km (50 miles) to the east.

The radio, said the battles occurred between December 20 and 22 and ended with the government troops being repelled.

It said the fighting signalled the start of a big government offensive against rebel strongholds in southern Gondar province, 300 km (200 miles) north of the capital Addis Ababa.

Merry Xmas

AMMAN, Dec 25, (Reuters): Jordan's King Hussein discussed Middle East and international developments with George Bush when he telephoned to wish the US President and the American people a merry Christmas, the state-run news agency Petra said.

The agency gave no further details of the conversation.

Jewish exodus

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Dec 25, (AP): Soviet Jews have become increasingly nervous about the possibility of anti-semitic violence, prompting a sharp rise in requests to emigrate, a top Israeli official said.

Jailed Palestinian died of blows

good would come out of this to prevent this from happening in the future," Baden said.

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Al Sheikh Ali's family said troops beat him during a search of his Gaza house that uncovered axes, masks, propaganda and a black uniform of the militant group Islamic Jihad.

On Sunday, Israel's Supreme Court ruled an army colonel must stand trial on

Arafat cool on US peace move

No PLO-Cairo rift

meeting Egypt's Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid:

"The tripartite meeting in Washington is not my concern as long as I have not been officially informed about it. When I am officially informed about it, then it will be my concern."

Palestinian and Egyptian political sources say there are differences between the PLO and Egypt over the proposed Palestinian-Israeli meeting, aimed at discussing an Israeli plan for Arab elections in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But Arafat said there were no differences between Egypt and the PLO.

"The Egyptian-Palestinian role is one. There is no such thing as a Palestinian role and an Egyptian role," Arafat said.

The PLO, demanding a central role in negotiations

SPECIAL REPORT

ARAB TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1989

60,000 killed in fighting

(Continued from Page 1)

street battles against the army. Four men believed to be Securitate agents were arrested by Yugoslav police today after they crossed the Danube river that forms the border between Yugoslavia and Romania, Belgrade radio reported.

Downtown Bucharest was generally quiet today, but radio and television reported fighting in the southwest suburb of Drumul Taberei and around the Ministry of Defence building in the capital's southeast. The reports gave no details on the clashes.

Hungarian radio and Yugoslavia's Tanjug news agency also reported fighting today in Timisoara, the western city where the uprising began, as Ceausescu loyalists barricaded themselves inside a militia building. Still, street cars and trolley buses resumed service in Romania's fourth-largest city.

Tanjug also reported serious fighting in Arad, near the Hungarian border, and the central city of Sibiu, without giving details. Sibiu was the former stronghold of Nicolae Ceausescu, the son of the deposed president who also was in custody today.

The National Salvation Committee, the provisional government that has taken control with army backing, appealed for a ceasefire and ordered civilians to turn in their arms today. It broadcast appeals to let the army fight the security police, who were shooting from rooftops and apartment windows in the capital and elsewhere.

Cards

Radio Bucharest played Christmas songs and carols today, the first time since the communist takeover in December 1947, and it reported on the positive foreign reaction to the uprising.

A Christmas tree and the Romanian flag without communist insignia decorated today the Communist Party central committee's building as Romanians celebrated freely Christmas for the first time in four decades.

Young men and women stood on the balcony of the central committee's building with a Christmas tree and the national flag.

The National Salvation Front now running the country had said all civilian combatants should lay down their arms by 5 pm (1500 GMT).

But when the hour arrived it was greeted by the heavy thud of the army's 50-mm. tank-mounted machine-guns.

Return fire, the sharp snap of the commandos' high-powered rifles and explosive bullets, dashed all hopes of an immediate halt to hostilities.

In the provincial cities of Timisoara, Arad and Sibiu, elements of the Securitate, also fought on. But troops supporting the front appeared to be winning the battle.

Tunnels

Many Securitate members have given up, but in Bucharest many more of the well-trained and heavily armed police are reported to be using a network of secret tunnels beneath the city as refuges and supply dumps.

A Hungarian Defence Ministry spokesman in Budapest likened them to rats, saying: "These are their last hours... I am convinced that the Romanian army will finish them off within a couple of days."

Any Christmas spirit on the streets of Bucharest began to evaporate in a rush of rising tension.

An excited crowd chased one-time Ceausescu court poet Adrian Paunescu down the city streets.

Paunescu, despised for his poems celebrating the Ceausescu era, tried to take refuge in the US embassy compound. The gates, however, remained closed as members of the crowd shouted for the poet's blood.

"He was close to Ceausescu. Our people can never forget this," said Bucharest resident Mihai Mihalachi.

At one point, Romanian troops guarding the compound fired machine guns into the air to drive back the crowd.

"No more Ceausescu no more Ceausescu" shouted the mob, 300-400 strong. The chants drew scattered sniper fire from loyalist commandos and sent people diving behind a brick wall to safety.

Paunescu then moved in, taking Paunescu into custody. It was unclear whether he was under arrest or simply driven off for his own protection.

In Geneva, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that Bucharest airport was now open to humanitarian flights, but refuelling and other services were difficult.

However, a spokesman said fierce fighting close to the airport had prevented assistance from getting through and caused flights to be diverted to other locations such as the Bulgarian city of Varna.

An ICRC medical team had



A Romanian soldier standing on a tank gives a victory sign and holds Romanian flag in Timisoara. (Reuter wirephoto)

Newsmen killed in Romanian fighting

TIMISOARA, Romania, Dec 25, (AP): Two foreign journalists have been killed and five wounded, including two Americans, during fighting between revolutionaries and forces loyal to deposed President Nicolae Ceausescu.

Danny Huwe, 42, a Belgian reporter for the Belgian VTM television, was shot and killed by snipers late yesterday when he tried to enter the capital from Sofia, Bulgaria, by car, VTM said today.

On Saturday, Jean-Louis Calderon of France's La Cinq TV station was crushed to death by a tank in Bucharest as he was reporting on the fighting.

Eyüre Aygen, 30, a reporter for the Turkish state television TRT who was travelling with Huwe and other journalists, was seriously wounded in the same attack on the outskirts of Bucharest, said Hıale Tima, a TRT official in Ankara, Turkey. Tima said Aygen was shot twice in the head by sniper fire.

Aygen remained seriously injured in a Bucharest hospital, VTM said in a news flash, retracting its statement one hour earlier that the Turkish journalist had died.

The four other journalists were wounded in the western city of Timisoara, and three ambulances were sent to Romania from Yugoslavia to evacuate the journalists today. All four were expected to survive.

Three of the journalists — John Daniszewski of the Associated Press, John Tagliabue of the New York Times, and Italian photographer Pasquale Modica — were wounded in separate incidents while driving in cars.

A Yugoslav reporter was shot while dashing through the streets of the western Romanian city, 20 miles (32 kilometres) east of the Yugoslav border.

A Yugoslav diplomat was grazed by a bullet.

The AP reporter, Daniszewski, travelling with a Yugoslav reporter, Tihomir Pajic, was wounded when a group of uniformed men on Saturday night ordered him to stop. As Daniszewski began to stop, they opened fire. One bullet struck his arm and two others grazed his head. The Yugoslav consulate said, quoting Pajic, who was not injured, the assailants fled after robbing the reporters, the consulate said.

Daniszewski was treated in Timisoara and then moved to Yugoslavia, where he was hospitalized today in satisfactory condition.

It was not immediately clear the side on which the assailants were.

The fighting, in which security forces loyal to Ceausescu are pitted against anti-Ceausescu civilians and their allies in the army, has been fierce in Timisoara, the cradle of the insurgency that toppled the hard-line communist dictator in a week.

Louis D. Boccardi, the President and General Manager of the AP, said: "The AP is doing everything possible to help John Daniszewski."

"The events in Romania graphically show the dangers that correspondents, AP and others, experience in reporting world news and the courage and bravery they display in doing their jobs."

Tagliabue was wounded in the back by a sniper who fired on a car carrying him and other reporters, said Bernard Gwertzman, foreign editor of the New York Times. The exact nature of Tagliabue's injury was not clear, Gwertzman said in New York, but the reporter was reported in satisfactory condition at a Timisoara hospital. Tagliabue is the younger brother of Paul Tagliabue, commissioner of National Football League and a Washington lawyer.

The Warsaw-based Daniszewski, 36, left Poland last week to cover the Timisoara fighting. He has been the AP's Warsaw correspondent since June 1987, reporting on the political upheaval that climaxed this year with the installation of a non-communist leadership in Poland.

An Ohio native, Daniszewski is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and worked for the AP in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and New York before joining the AP's foreign service.



Soldiers carry Christmas decorations in front of tanks occupying Republic Square in Bucharest. (Reuter wirephoto)



A soldier and a tank driver search through telescopes mounted on rifles for a sniper in central city area in Bucharest. (Reuter wirephoto)



Three supporters of Ceausescu lie dead in front of their armoured cars after being shot by soldiers in Bucharest suburb of Taberei. (Reuter wirephoto)

Ceausescu's wife had a taste for

'Scientist of world fame' and 'Mo

VIENNA, Austria, (AP): Elena Ceausescu, wife of ousted president Nicolae Ceausescu, used to be officially described as "the best mother of Romania" and a "scientist of world fame."

But Romanians say she was ill-educated, arrogant, had a taste for furs and expensive jewellery, and referred to ordinary citizens as "worms."

Elena was said to be a trained chemist, and books ascribed to her were sold throughout Romania and translated by the government into foreign language. But they were believed to be ghost-written by other scientists.

A member of the politburo and the virtual second-in-command of the country, she was one of the dozens of Ceausescu relatives who held

influential positions in the government. She often was at Ceausescu's side in public.

They acted much like a royal family, travelling together abroad, conducting well-staged visits to farms and factories, and making a regal promenade to greet lined-up guests at state receptions.

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Gen Ion Pacepa, who was chief of Romanian intelligence operations abroad until defecting to the United States in 1978, said in a book published last year that among his duties was to collect classified technological information to be used in the books by Elena.

As chairman of the National Council for Education, Elena was in charge of all curricula, from elementary schools to higher education.

The combination of Marxist indoctrination and official adulation of the Ceausescus "poisoned the soul and mind of our children and our culture," Bucharest radio quoted a Romanian writer as saying Sunday.

Official biographies listed Elena as being born in 1919. In fact, she was born in Petresti, a village

Support for govt growing

Relief flows in

BONN, Dec 25, (AP): West Germany, Poland and Yugoslavia recognised revolt leaders as Romania's legitimate representatives today, as relief supplies flowed toward the embattled country, officials said.

Japan, Thailand and Yugoslavia also welcomed the political developments in Romania, and expressed their support for the four-day-old National Salvation Committee, which took control Friday with backing of the army after the ouster of hard-line communist ruler Nicolae Ceausescu.

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher instructed Bonn's ambassador to Bucharest, Klaus Terlloth, to inform the committee that it was being recognised by West Germany, ministry spokesman Hans Schumacher said.

He also said a West German military plane carrying 25 tonnes of relief supplies flew from Cologne to Bucharest today.

In Warsaw, the Solidarity-led government recognised the committee as the legitimate representative of Romania. Three Polish relief planes also left for Bucharest, the official PAP news agency reported, citing a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It added the Polish government had been maintaining normal relations with the committee since it was formed.

The official Yugoslav news agency Tanjug said Yugoslavia considered the committee the true representative of the Romanian people, and reported that a government envoy arrived in Bucharest today to establish direct contact with it. Ilija Djakic, assistant Yugoslav foreign secretary, would lead a humanitarian aid from Yugoslavia at the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Tanjug said.

In Cairo, French Prime Minister Michel Rocard hailed the popular uprising against Romanian leader Ceausescu and defended his foreign minister's call for international action to help the revolt.

In Paris, Foreign Minister Roland Dumas yesterday raised the prospect of international military intervention in Romania, where thousands were reported killed in street fighting over the past Sunday to eight.

Rocard, approving remarks by Dumas, said: "We have only said that it was necessary that the international community offers all (help) possible for the Romanian people and their representatives, the National Salvation Front."

Commenting on remarks by Dumas that France would support the Soviet Union if it decided on intervention, the prime minister said Paris would consider a rapprochement between the front and Moscow a positive step.

But he said that it was "inaccurate to say that France hoped that Warsaw pact forces would intervene" to back the revolt.

Rocard, who arrived earlier today in Cairo on a week-long private visit, said he discussed with Mubarak events in Eastern Europe but gave no details.

It is a good change because it conforms to the people's need. We succeeded in making its way into the capital late yesterday, the spokesman said, and staff and supplies were on their way from the Dutch, Belgian, Finnish, British and West Germany Red Cross.

French Secretary of State for Humanitarian Affairs Bernard Kouchner, heading a French aid mission in Bucharest, said the situation in the hospitals was better than he had expected. "The hospitals are functioning adequately," he told French

radio. "There are fewer wounded than expected, which is good news for the Romanians, but there is still a great need for medical facilities."

Romania's First Deputy Premier, Gheorghe Oprea, today blamed ousted President Ceausescu for the deaths of thousands, and pledged support for the National Salvation Committee as the legitimate representative of the Romanian people.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II sought a special blessing for Romania and prayed that the hope of Christmas may find fertile ground in Eastern Europe, "awakened from a nightmare."

Wednesday on an official visit to Turkey, stayed on at the Romanian consulate when fighting broke out back home.

At least eight foreign governments have recognised the National Salvation Committee as the legitimate representative of the Romanian people.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II sought a special blessing for Romania and prayed that the hope of Christmas may find fertile ground in Eastern Europe, "awakened from a nightmare."

J. D. 10/16



Family and friends cry at the funeral of a young army soldier who was one of the first killed in street battles in Bucharest. (Reuter wirephoto)



Two woman soldiers kiss each other on top of a tank in Bucharest. (Reuter wirephoto)



Citizens of Bucharest hold a picture of Ceausescu as a soldier points his gun towards it. (Reuter wirephoto)

furs and expensive jewellery.

her of Romania' called pitiless

ern Romania, in 1917, met and married her husband when both were members of the party executive committee in 1973, and also was a member of the politburo and first vice-premier.

She once was elected "queen" of a workers' parade on May 1, 1939, and Elena reportedly lived like one while she and her husband ruled Romania.

They had a mountain retreat in the Carpathians, a villa at the Black Sea resort of Neptune, and a marble-floored mansion by a lake on the outskirts of Bucharest. At the time of the uprising, work was being completed on the huge presidential palace.

Facapă said he was ordered to ensure Elena could shop for jewellery whenever she wanted,

named a member of the party executive committee in 1973, and also was a member of the politburo and first vice-premier.

During her time as director of the Institute of Chemical Research, she sat on the floor at several national conferences but spoke on general matters.

Her scientific expertise was less than average, but she was a specific scientific theme arose, she referred to a "comrade engineer" who then

joined the Communist Party in 1937 in where she worked in a textile factory.

During her time as director of the Institute of Chemical Research, she sat on the floor at several national conferences but spoke on general matters.

He also said he reported to her once a week with tapes secretly recorded at the residences of their children — two sons and a daughter — and other high officials.

Now that the Ceausescus are in detention and awaiting trial, Romanians are openly contemptuous of them.

Romanian television on Sunday showed footage from one of their residences, displaying some of her jewellery and Western currency allegedly stashed in a bag for escape.

One of her many expensive fur coats was found at the Communist Party headquarters Friday and paraded in front of photographers after she and her husband fled the capital.

Facapă said he was ordered to ensure Elena could shop for jewellery whenever she wanted,

Justice

Secret police ran safe houses

Tunnels found

VIENNA, Austria. (AP) — Romanian soldiers battling forces loyal to deposed president Nicolae Ceausescu have turned up a vast network of safe houses and tunnels criss-crossing the city, stuffed with weapons for his security police.

Army officers speaking on Bucharest Radio, said they discovered secret tunnels running for kilometers (miles) between the party headquarters and Ceausescu's new palace "Casa Republicii" in downtown Bucharest. A tunnel ran up to a lake in the northern part of the city as a kind of runway route allowing Ceausescu to flee in case of danger.

The state-run Soviet television reported Sunday that Ceausescu and his wife Elena were captured while hiding in an underground bunker, but did not give further details.

The tunnels, some of whose entrances were masked by nondescript panels in city subway stations, contained weapons caches and were designed for Ceausescu's most loyal security troops, the radio said.

It said machine-guns and other unspecified arms were seized, but did not mention any amount.

Forces

The broadcasts, monitored in Vienna, appealed repeatedly in recent days to architects who had been involved in building such secret caches to come forward and divulge the layout to the army and other forces behind the revolt.

"The army found and neutralized 48 terrorist safe houses on just 20 streets in Bucharest," the radio said Sunday.

"They are in that house, near the pharmacy shooting from the windows," a Romanian woman told a radio reporter in a live transmission, against a backdrop of gunfire shots.

"Do you see the smoke? They probably put their archives on fire," she said.

Knowledgeable Romanians said they had previously heard of such safe houses in the capital and in all major cities, but the extent of the network of tunnels in Bucharest left many stunned.

The official Soviet Tass news agency had said that the streets along which the former president's "motorcade" used to drive "are the most dangerous places in the city."

"Patriotic forces fighters who are on duty on these streets said that special premises were furnished at offices, hotels and houses along these routes, where armed bodyguards sat in ambush," Tass said.

The agency said that "guards loyal to the Ceausescu clan" lived in apartments along these routes, which when Ceausescu was in power were shut off whenever he travelled along them and guarded by plainclothes men posted every 20 metres (65 feet).

Quoting knowledgeable Romanians, Tass said some "terrorists," under fire from the army, retreated to cemeteries where there they had hideouts among burial vaults and entrances to a system of secret underground tunnels.

Tunnels

Romanian exile architects who apparently were involved in building the tunnels on Saturday called the US-financed Radio Free Europe radio station, described details of their layout.

"There is one linking the Banesti and Otopeni airports," a five-kilometre (three-mile) route in northern Bucharest, an unidentified architect calling from New York told RFE. The broadcast was monitored in Vienna.

"And I've heard of another one, starting from the house of Ceausescu's sister Elena Barbușescu on the 13 September Street near a military unit leading to Rahovei Street" in southwest Bucharest, he said.

Bucharest Radio said a several-kilometre-long tunnel linking the party headquarters with the former royal palace and other parts of the city was stuffed with weapons caches and sophisticated monitoring equipment.

On Friday night, Ceausescu's loyal Securitate troops appeared from a hidden tunnel and opened fire on a crowd gathered in the Palace Square to listen to a proclamation by the provisional government.

Architects mentioned another tunnel linking the military academy to a former royal summer residence, near the botanical gardens, taken over by Ceausescu in the 1970s.

They also put the number of the Securitate safe houses in Bucharest in the hundreds.

Romanian architects in Bucharest said Ceausescu's new "Casa Republicii" residence in Bucharest was provided with an atomic bomb bunker outfitted like a war room with sophisticated command operations.

The specialists said they had to piece together this information from many sources, as Ceausescu used to replace work-

Scene

God delivered

First Xmas in 42 years

BUCHAREST, Romania. (AP) — Christmas music rang out over Romania for the first time in 42 years Sunday, and at the hilltop Metropolitan cathedral weeping Romanians thanked God and their children for deliverance.

For many, it was a Christmas miracle from St. Dimitrius, the 12th century hero whose relics lay in the gilt and frescoed cathedral which the deposed dictator Nicolae Ceausescu wanted to destroy.

"This was a painful reenactment of the Bible," said Patriarch Teocist, the grey-bearded pontiff of Romania's Orthodox church. "Ceausescu was a follower of Herod, was seeking Jesus Christ he ordered the killing of many thousands of children."

On Oct. 26, the eve of St. Dimitrius day, churchmen prayed for the dictator's downfall. It came, they said, as an answer to their prayer.

"Everybody believes that," said Patriarch Teocist, with a sly smile. "Don't forget, we are believers."

But in the liturgy, he attributed the uprising to the Romanians' tenacious faith and sense of justice.

That is what Victoria Ionita believes. A translator told a reporter she was "very happy" but her eyes suggested that was a feeble understatement.

"There were so many years when I did not come to church for fear of the government," she said. "Now there is shooting in the streets but I come because of trust in God."

Her eyes widened as she pressed on. "Today, we think of the day when Christ first arrived on Earth. That is how we will celebrate Christmas here."

When Ceausescu's name entered the conversation, she shuddered. "I must not hear that name," she said. "Do not mention it to me."

She spoke to reporters outside the mediaeval cathedral where aged couples and young men lit candles and bowed their heads. Soon a small crowd gathered and people took their turn to tell of their own miracles of faith.

Everyone gave a name, carefully spelling it several times. When asked if that would have happened a week ago — or if anyone would have expressed an opinion at all — they chorused a "no." Ionita repeated her "no" twice more.

One man produced a card identifying him as a senior editor with the state-run news agency. First he spoke calmly, professionally, to foreign colleagues. Within moments, he broke into shaking sobs.

He gave his name but later asked that it not be used. One still knew him, he said.

"All the things that I have seen and stood by silently for so many years," he said, pouring out a mix of Ceausescu's atrocities, blindness to criticism and of his own restored faith.

A woman in a green coat, Letitia Patrut, spoke of the students who would miss Christmas. "These young people, how they sacrificed for us," she said. "We must pray for these poor young people who defended the people."

One woman was so badly shaken she paused long moments between words. She had not eaten or drunk anything since Friday night because, she said, she was expressing sympathy for the victims. To emphasise her point, she fished from her pockets two bullets she had dug from her wall.

Asked where Romanians got their courage, the patriarch recited his own sermon Sunday on that subject.

"I see this as a climax of the virtues of Romanian people over the centuries. Our people have sacrificed for freedom. We have in ourselves a love for what is beautiful and just, but one cannot express this at anytime. When the time comes, this sort of explodes. The time is come," he said.

Graves

Graves in Timisoara

Brutality revealed

TIMISOARA, Romania. (Agencies) — Mutilated bodies lay in the cold winter air in the Romanian city of Timisoara, where thousands of people have been killed in the rebellion against dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

In the city where the revolt began friends and relatives of the victims picked through piles of corpses in a paupers' grave, sobbing as they searched for their loved ones.

Twenty bodies lay covered with mud and earth, but residents said families had taken away hundreds of relatives who had been exhumed.

A pregnant woman's belly had been cut open and her unborn baby removed and placed on top of her in a muddy grave.

Naked bruised bodies, some tied with barbed wire, lay on the ground.

"I am looking for my brother," one woman said. "I haven't seen him since the terrorists opened fire," a reference to the Securitate police who are still loyal to Ceausescu and waging a bloody campaign against the Romanian Army and people.

East German television has said up to 12,000 people have been killed in the fighting here.

Soldiers backs against the walls of buildings and scanning rooftops for Securitate snipers, conducted a house-by-house search of the city for the pro-Ceausescu units.

Residents said Securitate agents would open fire from command posts and ambulances then vanish without trace.

The city was almost completely blocked by heavy fighting on Saturday but there was only sporadic gunfire on Sunday.

Yugoslavia's Tanjug news agency said the Securitate had begun surrendering to regular army units who were trying to keep crowds of people from lynching them.

Romanians and relief workers crossing into Hungary from Transylvania have told of horrific scenes they had witnessed in the town of Timisoara, where the massacre of hundreds of demonstrators Dec. 17 sparked the current pro-democracy revolution in Romania.

Knowledgeable Romanians abroad told RFE about two terrorist centres at Branesti, east of Bucharest, for Arab students and another one in a wood near the capital for senior Arab officers.

A Romanian radio announcer Saturday appealed to army units and the population to help defend the national radio station against "Arab troops."

Who's who in Romania today

VIENNA, (Reuters) — Following are brief profiles of members of Romania's National Salvation Front, which declared itself Romania's new leadership after the collapse of Nicolae Ceausescu's regime on Friday:

The group has around 40 members. It contains a number of politicians and several prominent dissident Romanian artists and intellectuals described by a Romanian diplomat as "symbolic of the people's fight for freedom."

Ion Iliescu, 56, who knows Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev from his days as a student in Moscow, is the group's spokesman. A former secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee, he was demoted to vice-director of the State Technical Publishing House after criticising the regime and has been under constant police supervision. "He is a true intellectual who has a modern vision of the economic and social development of Romania," a Romanian diplomat said.

Corneliu Manescu, 73, originally announced as leader of the front, is a former foreign minister, one of six former party officials who sent an open letter to president Nicolae Ceausescu in March, attacking his hardline policies.

Doina Cornea is one of Romania's best known and most articulate dissidents who has written several essays damning political repression and the public's passivity.

A lecturer in French at Cluj University, she was removed for recommending Western philosophical and religious texts to her students. She is a member of the banned Eastern-Rite Catholic Church. In an open letter to Ceausescu last year, she called for him to abolish his "crushing apparatus of repressions" and start reforms.

Laszlo Tokes, 37, is an ethnic Hungarian priest in Timisoara who sparked off the wave of protests that unseated Ceausescu. He has spoken out in his sermons against suppression of the church, the treatment of the country's 1.7 million ethnic Hungarians and Ceausescu's plan to raze thousands of villages as part of a modernisation scheme. He was dismissed from his post in Timisoara in September and attempted to evict him from his church house brought thousands onto the streets in the western Romanian city.

Mircea Dinescu, 39, has been called by one editor "the angry young man of contemporary Romanian poetry, a moralist of the modern age." A prolific poet whose work has been translated and published in France, Italy, West Germany and the Soviet Union, he appeared last year on Radio Moscow's Romanian service to praise Soviet reforms. Known for his insistence on stating independent views, he has written in one poem:

*Stupid illusion
To surround oneself with walls
Then suddenly to feel
So free.*

Aurel Dragos, Munteanu, a writer who has urged his colleagues to throw off the cloak of repression. In a letter to the chairman of the Romanian Writers Union last year, he said writers would have only themselves to blame if they acquiesced in "being transformed into a crowd of idiots, lacking any civil responsibility."

General Stefan Gusa, is the army chief of staff leading the assault on the pro-Ceausescu secret police. His colleague, General Victory Stanculescu, has been appointed deputy defence minister under General Nicolae Militaru, described by the diplomat as "a real soldier, not a political figure."

Dumitru Mazilu, a professor and former head of the Foreign Ministry's legal department, failed to show up to present a report on human rights and youth in Romania to the UN sub-commission on the prevention of discrimination last year. Romania said he was suffering from heart trouble, but Mazilu said he could not travel because he was under house arrest and subject to police terror and death threats.

His report, smuggled out with the letter, accused Romanian leaders of torture and alleged the repressive rule of Ceausescu had reduced Romanians to poverty. Silviu Brucan is a former ambassador to the United States and the United Nations. He is a theoretician and former professor in the party academy. He also signed the protest letter to Ceausescu, as did Grigore Racceanu, described as a veteran communist.



Upasana introduces new talent

UPASANA'S sixth Musical Evening was held at IAC last Friday, in front of a packed audience. The show started at 5.45 pm with a welcome speech by its President Madhu.

It has been Upasana's aim to introduce talented artists to the audience through their programmes. This time it was able to discover 6 new faces including a 6th Std. student at the Indian School, Salma, on the violin. Others were Peter on the vocal, Chandrababu on violin, Bashir on the organ, Nazim on the rhythm guitar, Ruwan on the drums.

WHAT'S ON

ARTS

Lecture
PROFESSOR Oleg Grabar, of Harvard University, USA, will give a public lecture on "The Earliest Representations of Mosques in Islamic Art."

The lecture will be held on Wednesday, 3rd January, 1990 at 6:00 pm at the Kuwait National Museum lecture theatre. The lecture, which is in English, is open to all.

Seminar

THERE will be a seminar at the DAA on "Arabic & European Art in the Light of Zodiocal Symbolism" December 10, 1989 - January 10, 1990. Sunday and Tuesday 11.00 - 12.30 am. Anyone wishing to register for this seminar may do so at the DAA during museum hours.

Tribal Rugs & Oriental Prints
THE Sultan Gallery will be holding a Tribal Rugs and Oriental Prints exhibition starting Saturday Dec 23 until Jan 15. On Saturday, the Gallery will be open from 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm. Else, it will be open from 9.30 am to 12.30 noon and 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm. For more information contact: 2421951.

SOCIAL

Musical Variety
PAKISTAN Arts Circle will hold a musical variety programme on the eve of the "New Year" on Sunday, the 31st Dec, 1989 at Sr. Vice-President's residence. Zahid Saeed Khan, Ambassador of Pakistan will preside. The programme includes competition of singers, presentation of a leading poet of Kuwait, bingo and "Bait-Baazi" of ladies, as well as many other attractive features. Families interested are welcome but they should collect the invitation cards. Honorary member families are requested to kindly collect their invitation cards from the Secretary, Public Relations. Hamid Mahmoud: 4716258 as soon as possible.



4th I.W.D.C. honoured

Head of the Higher Organising Committee of the Fourth International Water Desalination Conference, Dr. Fatima Al Awadi held a private party to honour the operating committees. Gifts were distributed in a special manner in order to avoid complaints or discrimination in the value of the gifts presented by some national companies. Picture shows Dr. Al Awadi and Dr. Abdul Jawad.



Tamil hit of Sreenivasan

Swapnasree, another Indian School student, also sang some of the fast numbers in Tamil and her "Kuzhaloothum Kannanukku" was enjoyed by the fans.

Rajan proved his superb singing abilities by singing some fast and slow numbers.

Murugan's "Ilayaraja" hit "Nilavathu Maanthin Mele" was very thrilling and the audience danced to its music. Joy, Thomas and Vijayan sang one song each.

On the orchestra, the team work was co-ordinated by Joseph with remarkable sup-

port from Rajgopal on the organ, Bashir on the synthesizer, Daniel Varghese on the lead guitar, Nazim on the rhythm guitar, Joseph Mathew on the bass, Narayanan, Joshi, Chandrababu and Thomas John on the violin, Ruwan on the drums, Nandakumar and Shivsankar on the tabla, Dolac, Mridangam Murugan on Mukersank and small rhythm and Rajan on special effects and small rhythm.

The show came to an end with the rendering of a Hindi number "Jaane Do" by the versatile Hindi singers Samuel and Ambika.

"Nirjhar"

A CULTURAL function under the auspices of "Nirjhar Sangskritik Goshthi" will be held at Bangladeshi embassy premises on 29th December, (Friday).

Mohsin Ali Khan, the political Advisor and Charge d'Affaires of Bangladesh embassy will be the chief guest.

All Bangladeshi have been requested to kindly procure the invitation card in order to attend the function. For details please contact the Tele. Nos. Mahe Alam - 4315962; Manan - 4317223; Salam - 4330416.

Goodbye 1989

SUPER Top Ranks present the most fabulous show of the year: Goodbye 1989. The programme includes glamorous dance performances from Hindi, English, Punjabi and Arabic. Popular dance "Ghaza-Neh-Kiya-Ha-Ishaara" from Trivedy by Valencia Rose Bud Tanaka and Group and the most popular pop band Ajeen, will give performances, especially for the Arab audience. The show will be on December 28 from 4 pm onwards. All are welcome at the Doha Entertainment City's International Theatre. Entry to city is free. For more info: Kalid Fawzi on 4879455, Teneskoon on 4319864 and Valencia Rose Bud 5615291.

II Annual one act Play Competition

INDIAN Arts Circle announces the II Annual One Play Competition to be held during Eid holidays in April, 1990. The competition is open to Plays in any Indian language including English. Awards shall include Best Play 1st, 2nd & 3rd, Best Director, Best Actor & Actress, Best Child Actor, Best Stage Setting and Best Acting Performance from each team. Registration form with rules & regulations are available from Indian Arts Circle office at Funaietes. Last date of submitting registration form with required details is 28th February, 1990.

Please contact IAC office (Tel: 3904817) for further details. All Indian associations engaged in theatrical activities are requested to join.

Victory Day function
THE Shatadal Cultural Group will observe the Victory Day of Bangladesh with a cultural function on Dec 26 at Messia Beach Hotel. A brief discussion on Bangladesh and the War of Liberation will be followed by a musical sketch titled "Amar sonar Bangla, ami tomay bhalo bati."

Annual Day celebration

MAHARASHTRA Mandal, Kuwait is celebrating its first annual day on 29th Dec '89 Friday, with variety entertainment programme from 1000 to 1500 hrs at the Indian Embassy Hall.

Members and guests are requested to contact Tel. Nos. 5725176 or 2424242 or 3921372 for entry passes."

IAC Children's Competition

THE dates of finale of the Children's Competition will take place at IAC Funaietes on 13th, 14th, 15th, 27th and 28th December '89 and 18th January '90 respectively. For more details contact Indian Schools.

Saaz Aur Awaz

FEB 2: Saaz Aur Awaz, one of the leading Indian musical groups of Kuwait present their fourth musical programme entitled Bhule Bisre Geet. The show includes Hindi film songs at the Indian Arts Circle, Funaietes on February 2, 1990. Passes will be available shortly.

Pongal celebrations

BHARATHI Kalai Mandram is organising Pongal Celebrations on 29th December in the Indian Arts Circle auditorium with a variety of entertainments for children and adults from 5 to 8.30 pm. All are welcome. For details and entry passes please contact 3716976, 3718935, 5631230 or 5627718.

Philippine embassy

THE Philippine embassy in Kuwait will remain closed for three (3) consecutive days, from Saturday, 30 December 1989 until Monday, 01 January 1990, on account of Philippine holidays.

Kuwait Cultural Centre

NEW courses at the cultural centre: yogic healing classes, two sessions in the evenings on Tuesdays and Thursdays; jiu-jitsu (martial arts), Saturday and Mondays, pm; Chinese cooking classes, Saturdays, 9-11 am. For details call 5624393.

Vishal Musical Group

VISHAL Musical Group is conducting their 2nd musical programme on Friday, January 5 at 6.00 pm at Funaietes Indian Arts Circle. The programme contains the most popular old and new hit songs from Hindi films. Also classical and fast dances by young talented artists. Centres for distribution of passes will be announced shortly.

People's Trust Club

DEC 29: People's Trust Club welcomes you to a day of your life at Ramada Al Salam (Marriott) Hotel. New Ballroom from 10.30 am onwards. Nimble feet hungry palate, perfect blend of music and style. A get-together with buffet. Featuring Stepping Stones, Top Ranks, Perfect Strangers. There will be novelties and surprises galore.

Kuwait Welsh Society

A CHRISTMAS party will be held on December 28, 1989 at 8 pm. For details ring 3721383 or 3713467.

NIGHT CHEMIST

Kuwait
Al Hajei Pharmacy
Al Hilali St
Al Amal Pharmacy
Mubarak Al Kabeer St

Hawalli & Nugra
Zain Pharmacy
Ebin Khaldoun St

Salma & Rumaiyya
Deena Pharmacy
Extension of Amman St

Fahabeel & Ahmad
Adel Pharmacy
Al Dabous St

Jeeb Shuyookh
Palestine Pharmacy
Main St
Jahra
Al Abraj Pharmacy
Daabat Al Khozai St

Kankani Drama

THE New Goans Overseas Association is pleased to announce Menino De Bandar's "Soussaram Astana Dial" a Konkani play which will be held in the Indian Arts Circle (Funaietes) on the 16th of February 1990. The cast all from Goa includes M. Boyer, Felicy, Josephine, Betty Alvaras, Tita, Junior Rod, Carlos, Rosario Dias, C. D'Silva, John de Parra and Menino de Bandar.

SPORTS

At the Holiday Inn Health Club and Recreation Centre

SWIMMING lessons available all year round with qualified swimming instructors. Open to non members. Mon-Tues-Wed 3.30 to 5.30, beginners-improvers-adults. Mixed keep fit classes. Wed 5-6

Thurs 6-7, Fri 12-1.00 and 1-2.00, Sat 5-6.00. Ladies keep fit, Mon 5-6, Tues 5-6, Fri 5-6 and Sun 5.30-6.30. Martial arts w/ black belt instructor Mon-Wed 6-ton Taekwondo Sat-Mon, 7-8 Thurs 5-6. Bowling alley available for private company and community tournaments. Five squash courts. Squash handicap every Sunday start 6 pm — all standards, open to non-members. Squash coaching available from professional coach everyday, from 1 pm. Massage for men and women. Gym facilities for men and women. Tennis courts — coaching available. Plus lots more.

Phone for further details — Recreation Manager, 4742000 ext. 6788 Julie Dent or 6700 recreation.

Boys Own Club tie-breaker tournament

BOY'S Own Club are happy to announce that entries are open for the tie-breaker football festival to be held on 29/12/89, at Al Sour Ground.

Teams wishing to enter this football festival can contact Joe D'Souza on 4813622/25 ext. 147.

PRAYERS

Fajr:	5.16 am
Zohr:	11.48
Asr:	2.38 pm
Maghreb:	4.57
Isha:	6.19

CINEMA

Al Andalus
Licence to kill
Salmyah
Hall booked
Al Hamra
Moontrap
Drive-in
Arabic film
Al Firdous
Main Azaad Hoon
Fahabeel
The Lost Idol
Al Jaha
Eta Tiko Aasha
Granada
Dowryham
Sulabiikhat
The Hindenburg
Jeeb
Sarparani
Ahmadi Drive-in
Arabic film

TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

KTV 1

MORNING PERIOD

- 9.30 Opening and Holy Quran
- 9.40 Sabah Al Kher - News and Variety
- 10.00 Cartoon serial
- 10.15 Magazine D'Actualite (repetition)
- 10.30 Watadour Al Dawaer: Arabic serial (Part 9)
- 11.30 Sabah Al Kher News and Variety
- 11.40 Taaleel: Beduin serial, starring Wahed Al Sameer, Anwar Khalil, Nariman Al Faqeeb, and Yousef Al Jamal
- 12.30 News summary
- 12.35 Sabah Al Kher News
- 12.37 Holy Quran and Closedown

EVENING PERIOD

- 4.00 Opening and Holy Quran
- 4.15 The World Today via Satellite (repetition)
- 4.45 Bereen: Cartoon serial
- 5.15 You and Your Health: local programme, presented by Dr Hussain Al Momen
- 5.35 We Are Your Friends: local programme
- 5.45 Night chemists, airlines and official advertisements
- 6.00 Al Bahr La Yabtale Al Shams: Arabic serial (Part 9)
- 7.15 Sports programme: sports programme, prepared and presented by Metlaq Nassar
- 7.55 Madein Kuwait: information programme, prepared and presented by Dr Ali Al Damki
- 8.30 Good Evening and local news
- 9.00 News in Arabic
- 9.45 Al Manzel Al Khafi: Arabic serial (Part 14)

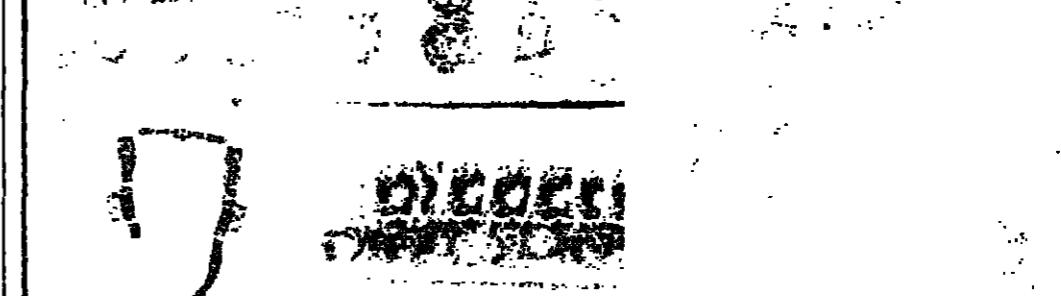
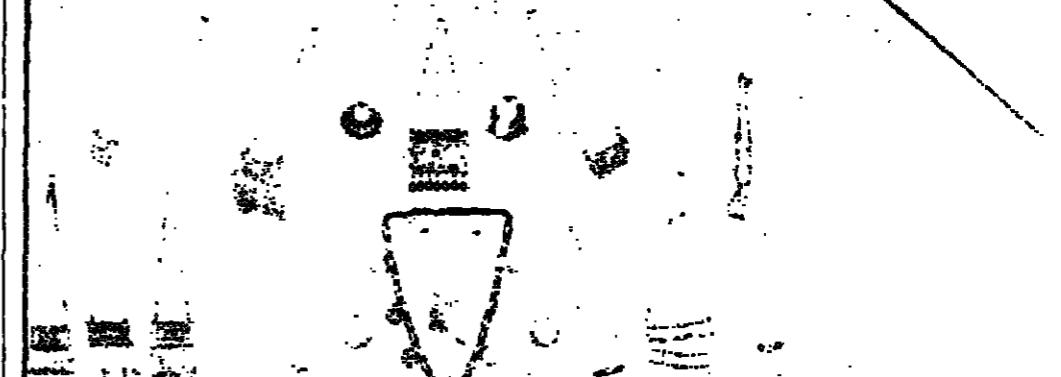
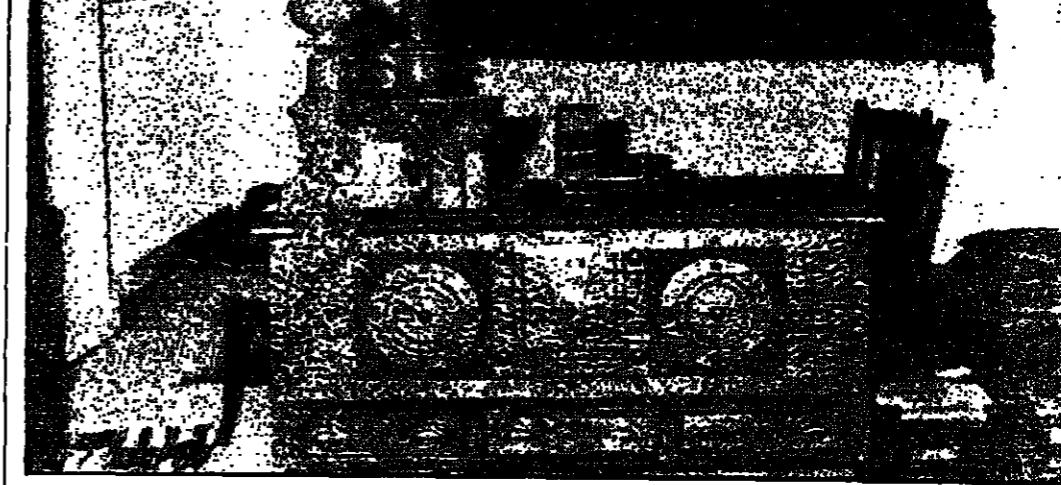


KTV 2—A Different World

- 10.35 Variety late night show with guest star Hasan Husni
- 11.45 News summary
- 11.50 The World Today via Satellite
- 12.15 Holy Quran and Closedown
- 8.30 You and the Law
- 8.45 The Twilight Zone — "The Junction": A miner is trapped deep in a mine hole where he receives help from the ghost of a previous miner who died in the mine!
- 9.30 The Vital Element — "The Platinum": A look at platinum as a precious metal used as pieces of jewelry for women... Platinum importance in industry...
- 10.00 A Different World: At the end of the final semester everybody starts planning how to spend their holidays.
- 10.30 Murphy's Law — "If Anything Can Go Wrong": A woman steals a piece of jewelry and places it inside a refrigerator where another woman watches her take the piece of jewelry away.... Murphy has to find the original thief, and recover the jewelry....
- 11.30 News in Brief
- 11.45 Magazine D'Actualite

KTV 2

- 6.00 Opening announcement & Holy Quran
- 6.10 Diplodots: A cartoon series for children
- 6.30 Fast Forward: A look at a new computer game called "Zip" played on video and TV sets.
- 7.00 Watch All Night - Eps. 7. "Web": Tess Buscombe comes face to face with the Y-Banians secret agents holding her father as prisoner. The Y-Banians threaten they will kill her father if Tess refuses to hand over the documents...
- 7.30 Wild World Of Animals
- 8.00 News in English



Sultan Gallery goes tribal

The Sultan Gallery is currently holding a Tribal Rugs and Oriental Prints exhibition on Jan 15. Open from 12.30 noon and 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm. For more information contact: 2421951

BUSINESS & FINANCE

Egypt to enhance Arab oil ties: Qandil

CAIRO, Dec 25, (UPI): Oil Minister Abdel Hadi Qandil said today that Egypt is encouraging oil-rich Arab countries to invest their petrodollars in joint ventures in the petroleum industry.

"Egypt is currently considering setting up joint ventures with other Arab countries to make use of Arab investments in carrying out petroleum schemes in the country by employing Egypt's expertise," Qandil said.

Qandil is current chairman of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum exporting countries (Oapco.)

The minister said his department is encouraging investments by Egypt's private sector in the oil sector and its industries.

One foreign companies operating in Egypt in search for oil and gas, Qandil said a new policy is being applied in "monitoring" implementation of the terms of the agreements signed with them.

"This is part of rationalising the cost and expenditures directed for the search," he said but did not elaborate.

Qandil's deputy Salah Hafez meantime said that between 12 and 14 new agreements with foreign oil companies were expected to be signed next year.

Qandil also said that foreigners working in the oil sector in Egypt only represent 1.5 per cent of the labour force employed in the field.

Sheikh Ali for Indonesia

KUWAIT, Dec 25: (Kuna): Kuwait Oil Minister Sheikh Ali Al Khidafa will visit Indonesia and Thailand at the end of this week, a press report said here today.

A local daily said Sheikh Ali will hold talks with officials of the two countries on oil issues.

The paper pointed out that Kuwait Petroleum Corporation has activities and projects in these two Asian countries.

Kerala to seek fresh aid from Centre

By M.C. Basu
Business editor

THE Marxist-led Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala, India, will seek several long-term fiscal concessions or moratorium and fresh assistance from the central government to solve state's financial problems.

The Chief Minister E.K. Nayanar and the State Finance Minister V. Viswanatha Menon will visit Delhi during the first week of January and call on Prime Minister V.P. Singh and Finance Minister Prof Madhu Dandavate.

The Kerala Finance Minister told the Arab Times in an exclusive telephone interview that financial difficulties faced by the present government were the creation of the previous Congress (I) led coalition government in the state. It is for the repayment of the dues made by the previous government and the present government seeks moratorium on dues to the central government. Concessions include special assistance of Rs2000 million to the state, waiver of interest on dues, hike in the ceiling for ways and means and extension of the deadline for repayment of overdraft.

The political leadership in Kerala has high

hopes on the new National Front government at the Centre. The state cabinet which met last week and discussed these proposed demands. The state government had made these demands time and again to the previous Congress (I) government at the Centre, but there was only a lukewarm response. Political leadership in Kerala believes that the new central government would not discriminate against states on political grounds. The state government would require special assistance of Rs2000 million to solve the financial difficulties. According to a recent report that Kerala government's additional commitment

such as revised pay scales for civil servants and hike in pension payments, would come to around Rs120 million a month.

The previous government is reported to have taken an advance of Rs1500 million from the Central Plan allocation. This has been a heavy burden inherited from the previous government. Moreover, the over-drafts to the tune of Rs3,780 million had been converted into short-term loans by the previous regime. On this the present government was expected to repay Rs2440 million. All these dues could be cleared only by 1991

end. So the Kerala government feels that a moratorium on these repayments will be the only way out.

Meanwhile, Dandavate said early last week that the economy was marked by a high degree of indebtedness, which almost amounts to a debt trap. Including the non-resident Indian deposits the country's foreign debt burden was of the order of Rs1000 billion. The debt servicing ratio had crossed 30 per cent. "This means that our borrowings are being used mainly for repayment of interest and hardly for development purposes.

As decade draws to a close

US investors seek overseas markets

NEW YORK, Dec 25, (Reuters): With the decade drawing to a close, big US fund managers are sizing up their gains and in many cases, deciding that the biggest opportunities may lie investing in stock markets outside the United States.

The 1980s saw world stock markets rise dramatically as the pursuit of winning strategies caused more investors to take a global approach.

The decade is being closed with a flourish as the Dow Jones Industrial average has risen 540 points so far, or about 25 percent, this year.

But now, analysts are concerned that the US economy could worsen at the beginning of the decade and are looking for markets more promising than Wall Street.

US stocks ended lower this week despite a late burst of buying that resulted in a 20-point rally on Friday and signs that the Federal Reserve has eased credit. The Dow Jones industrial average closed 28.16 points for the week to end at 2,711.39.

"We're very close to a recession and it could start in the third quarter of 1990," says Hugh Johnson of First Albany Corp.

"The 1980s was the best decade in the history of the world for stocks and bonds together," said Byron Wien, strategist at Morgan Stanley Co., but the analyst warns that "the 1990s are going to be very difficult."

He specifically points to the

unraveling of some leveraged buyout deals and the softening real estate market in certain parts of the United States.

But Wien and others believe the democratisation of Eastern Europe will present great opportunities in the 1990s.

In Tokyo, traders hope the next decade will be a repeat of the 1980s, which saw the market move to the top of the world in terms of capitalisation. With forecasts of a strong and steady economy, it may get the best support.

Pelham Smithers, research coordinator at Shearson Lehman Hutton, deserves "we will see good growth in the Japanese economy over the next 10 years with increased corporate profit margins." He said the Nikkei index could gain 10 per cent to 12 per cent a year in the 1990s, compared with average annual growth of 15 per cent over the last 20 years.

The Nikkei index of 225 stocks finished Friday at 38,040.37, compared with 6,560.16 on the first trading day of 1980. Some traders in Tokyo speak of an index at 80,000 in six years and 100,000 in 10 years.

In the United States, Dow index of 30 stocks has advanced from 338.74 at the end of 1979 to 2,711, having backed off from a record 2,791 on Oct 9 of 1989.

Brokers in London, talking about the 1980s, point first to the explosion in volume after the deregulation of the market in 1986. The Financial Times-Stock Exchange index of 100 stocks, introduced in 1984, was 2,362.0 recently, compared with a

value of 509.2 calculated at the end of 1979.

The British merger boom of the late 1980s, which has helped propel the market, is expected to continue in the 1990s.

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How can the average go in the 1990s? "Most people would say 4,000 or 5,000, but in the meantime it might go down first," says William Leffre

Loan agreements

KHARTOUM, Dec 25, (Kuna): Loan agreements were signed here under which the Arab bank for Economic Development in Africa, Bades, will extend \$4 million to Angola and \$3 million dollars to Gambia, according to a press release issued yesterday by the Khartoum-based Bades.

The agreements were signed yesterday by Bades board chairman Ahmed Abdalla Al Akel and Eugenio Correia De Sousa, the director of the investment loans department, for Angola, and Sahoob S. Sabally, the Minister of Finance and Trade, for Gambia.

The loan extended to Angola is repayable over 15 years including a four-year grace period at an annual interest rate of 5 per cent. It is designed to help the Angolan National Bank finance a number of small projects in the fields of agriculture, agro-industry, light industry, construction, fisheries, transport, etc.

The loan to Gambia is repayable over 18 years including a grace period of 4 years at an annual rate of interest of 4 per cent.

TOKYO, Dec 25, (Reuter): The Bank of Japan's decision today to lift its key interest rate turned out to be just the Christmas present financial markets here wanted.

Tokyo stock and bond prices climbed after the move as investors who had been worried by uncertainty over Japan's interest rate policy returned to the market to buy, brokers said.

"The rate has been raised and what was casting a shadow over the market has now vanished," said Tadashi Kawakami, senior trader at Merrill Lynch Japan.

The key 225-share Nikkei index rose 38.25 points, or more than one per cent, to end at 38,432.62.

Japanese government bond prices also rose, with the yield on the key 10-year issue slipping to 5.73 per cent from 5.79 per cent on Friday.

The Central Bank increased its discount rate by half a percentage point today, to 4.25 per cent.

Although a rate rise would normally be expected to knock stock and bond prices lower, it had the opposite effect today because some investors had feared that the increase would be bigger.

"The rate rise came as very good news to investors," said Yoshiro Shimoyama, head of equities at broker Nikko Securities.

The currency markets also reacted perversely to the discount rate rise, as the Japanese yen edged lower against the dollar. Higher interest rates normally make a currency more attractive to hold, not less.

The US currency ended firmer against the yen, but easier against the West German mark.

Dealers see lower dollar

TOKYO, Dec 25, (Reuter): Japan's move today to raise its key interest rate by half a percentage point to prevent inflation was expected to weaken the dollar, but to leave the West German mark unscathed.

The move by the Bank of Japan to push its official discount rate up to 4.25 per cent, its highest level since early 1986, will reinforce bearishness for the US currency by making the yen more attractive to investors.

Traders said the dollar was expected to decline more slowly against the yen than the mark, but they expected to see it weaken against the Japanese currency in the coming month.

Takeshi Hanai, a manager at the Industrial Bank of Japan, said the dollar, which closed at 142.72 yen in Tokyo today, could fall to 139 yen over the next month.

The rise in Japan's discount rate, the rate the Central Bank charges commercial banks for loans, followed media reports in the past week predicting the move and had already largely been factored into the market.

Dealers said it was unlikely to put pressure on the mark, which they saw heading towards 100 yen.

"It depends on what happens to the dollar against European currencies," says Hiroshi Murata, assistant general manager at Sumitomo Bank. "But if the US currency falls further against the mark, we could see the dollar weaker against the yen, too."

Many dealers say the dollar is likely to test the 1.6500-mark level during the next month on the view US interest rates will fall further while West German rates remain firm.

Iran boosts imports

DUBAI, Dec 25, (Reuter): Iran's imports from Dubai more than doubled in the first half of this year after moves to liberalise the Iranian economy, a magazine said today.

Imports totalled \$17 million dirhams (\$222 million) compared with \$35 million dirhams (\$391 million) in the first half of 1988, the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry magazine said.

It said the 1989 figure accounted for 20 per cent of the emirate's total exports and re-exports of around \$1.14 billion.

Trade accord

BAGHDAD, Dec 25, (Reuter): The four Arab Co-operation Council (ACC) member states today signed trade and other economic protocols in Baghdad, the Iraqi News Agency reported.

It said the ministers of trade and economy of Iraq, Egypt, Jordan and North Yemen agreed measures to stimulate intra-ACC trade, including lifting trade barriers.




HUSAIN MAKKI AL JUMA
HUSAIN MAKKI AL JUMA SONS CO.
GENERAL MANAGER AND STAFF

WELCOME

THE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

MR. YANG CHANG KUN

AND

THE ACCOMPANYING DELEGATION TO KUWAIT

**THE SUPDT. EMPLOYMENT DIVISION
 KUWAIT OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)
 AHMADI — KUWAIT
 REQUIRES
 Senior Engineer (Mechanical)**

Kuwait Oil Company (K.S.C.) has a vacancy for a Senior Mechanical Engineer, with Project Engineer experience — preferably to be under 45 years of age.

Applicants for the post must have a university degree from a recognised university in Mechanical Engineering, membership of the professional institute, minimum of 8 years' experience in handling of projects in the field of oil and gas industry, including gas compression, oil production and storage facilities, sound experience in vibration analysis of rotating equipment, capability to produce and prepare project scope, specifications, check and review contractor's design of mechanical equipment such as pressure vessels, tanks pumps, compressors and piping.

Applicants should be able to develop project conceptual design, technical specifications, preparing material requisitions, compiling tender packages, technical evaluation of bids, review of contractor's design, material/equipment and installation specifications, follow-up on contractor's performance throughout the design tendering and construction stages.

An excellent benefits package includes 42 days paid annual leave, annual return air fares, housing at nominal rent, free dental and medical care and excellent recreational facilities.

Interested applicants are requested to apply within two weeks from the date of this advertisement with full resume, passport copy, copies of educational and experience certificates and 3 photographs, copy of civil ID card and a telephone number to the following address:

**THE SUPDT. EMPLOYMENT DIVISION
 KUWAIT OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)
 61008, AHMADI, KUWAIT.**

**THE SUPDT. EMPLOYMENT DIVISION
 KUWAIT OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)
 AHMADI — KUWAIT
 REQUIRES**

Design Engineer (Mechanical)

Kuwait Oil Company (K.S.C.) has a vacancy for a Design Engineer (Mechanical) preferably between 30 and 40 years of age for project design work.

Applicants for the post must have a university degree in Mechanical Engineering, a membership of the institution of Mechanical Engineering would be an advantage. A minimum of 6 years' post-graduate experience is required, including at least 4 years' relevant experience in the fields of oil and gas industry.

Successful applicant will report to a senior engineer and will be responsible for the overall design of the projects allocated to him and for liaison with specialist engineers. The work of project design also includes design calculations, preparation of sketches and materials lists, selection of equipment, preparation of technical specifications, review of contractor's design work.

An excellent benefits package includes 42 days paid annual leave, annual return air fares, housing at nominal rent, free dental and medical care and excellent recreational facilities.

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**THE SUPDT. EMPLOYMENT DIVISION
 KUWAIT OIL COMPANY (K.S.C.)
 61008, AHMADI, KUWAIT.**

Japanese automaker to set up new US HQ

TOKYO, Dec 25, (UPI): Major Japanese automaker Nissan Motor Co. said yesterday it will establish a new headquarters in Torrance, California, to oversee the company's all operations in the United States.

The Tokyo-based company said the new firm, Nissan North America, Inc., will co-ordinate 10 subsidiaries now operating in the United States.

NNA, which will be officially founded Jan 1, will begin operations on a small scale but plans call for its functions to be gradually expanded.

A new corporate communications office and a purchasing office will be opened in Detroit, Michigan, and other offices will also be set up in New York and Washington DC, the company said.

The new firm, capitalised at \$2 million, will employ about 30 workers at the start-up, the company said.

Yutaka Kume, president of Nissan Motor Co., said the company has projected its domestic car sales in 1990 at 1.37 million units, up 4.0 per cent over this year.

He said the export target has been set at 1.07 million units, a moderate 0.2 per cent increase.

Kume said the company plans to raise its overseas production to 683,000 units, up 7.0 per cent over this year.

He said the company's domestic sales this year are estimated to hit a record 1.322 million units, up 13.9 per cent over the preceding year, raising its domestic market share to 23.8 per cent, up 0.4 points.

Kume said the company plans to expand its product line with the marketing of the new small car Primera with a 1800 cc to 2000 cc engine in February while introducing a completely new Sunny passenger model in January.

Meanwhile Honda Motor Co., the world's largest motorcycle maker, said it has started manufacturing its popular "Civic" four-door Sedan at its East Liberty, Ohio, facility.

The Tokyo-based company said the \$380 million project calls for manufacturing 65,000 units in 1990.

Honda, one of Japan's leading automakers, said combined production of Accord and Civic models at the plant will reach 510,000 units per year in 1991, of which 70,000 units will be exported to Japan and other countries.

The company said the number of workers employed at the plant will be increased to about 1,800 from the present 450 when full production begins.

Local procurement will exceed 70 per cent with engines supplied from the company's Aichi Engine Plant, the company said.

Mercedes-Benz Japan Co. said it has completed an after-sale service training centre at the German industrial centre in Yokohama, near Tokyo, to improve its service to local customers.

Interest Rates

Buying	Selling
US dollar	0.29227
Sw. Fr.	0.29342
DM	0.17141
F. Fr.	0.18843
U.S. £	0.05007
Jap. yen	0.0002286
Bah. dir.	0.77525
UAE Dir.	0.000157
S. Dir.	0.0001778
O. Dir.	0.00016
O. riyal	0.75894

KUWAIT, Dec 25, (Kuna): Following are the international currency rates as quoted by local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait today.

Federal funds rate dips

Japan raises key interest rate

Move to head off inflation

Car of the Year Award

NAGOYA, Japan, Dec 25, (UPI): Japan's top automaker Toyota Motor Corp. said today its luxury Sedan Celsior has been named the winner of Japan Car of the Year for 1989-90.

The Nagoya-based company said Celsior, the domestic version of the Lexus introduced in the United States this fall, was selected from among 47 new models introduced by nine Japanese competitors from Nov 1, 1988 to Nov 6 this year.

The company said Celsior was cited for such characters as development concept, design and styling, performance, quality, and price.

Meanwhile Nissan Motor Co. said today its sales finance and leasing subsidiary in West Germany will start business Jan 1.

The Tokyo-based major automaker said the company, Nissan Finance GMBH, based in Neuss near Dusseldorf, is its fourth car sales finance firm overseas, following those in Australia, the United States and the Netherlands.

The new firm is a wholly owned subsidiary of Nissan Motor Deutschland GMBH, a Neuss-based finished car and parts importer-distributor, the company said.

The rate has been raised and what was casting a shadow over the market has now vanished," said Tadashi Kawakami, senior trader at broker Merrill Lynch Japan.

The Central Bank seemed set to raise the rate last week but was stopped at the last minute by Hashimoto.

Although Japan's inflation rate of about 2-1/2 per cent remains modest by international standards, the Central Bank is

concerned that pressure for higher prices is mounting.

The weak yen is pushing up prices of goods imported into Japan while rapid economic growth is aggravating labour shortages and encouraging demands for higher wages.

The increase came as no surprise to financial markets following widespread media reports over the past week predicting the move.

Tokyo stock prices jumped higher after the rate rise was announced as investors worried by uncertainty over Japan's interest rate policy returned to the market to buy.

"The rate has been raised and what was casting a shadow over the market has now vanished," said Tadashi Kawakami, senior trader at broker Merrill Lynch Japan.

The Central Bank seemed set to raise the rate last week but was stopped at the last minute by Hashimoto.

Although the Bank of Japan can legally raise the rate on its

realities and get the tacit understanding of the finance minister.

Analysts said Hashimoto was apparently angry that news of the increase was leaked to the press before it was officially announced and so delayed the move.

The interest rate hike followed an end to a rift between the Central Bank and the Finance Ministry on interest policy.

The Bank of Japan postponed

ing to a two-month low against the yen, the Central Bank said.

The dollar closed the morning session at 142.55 yen, down 1.12 yen from Friday's closing rate, it said.

The interest rate hike followed

an end to a rift between the Central Bank and the Finance Ministry on interest policy.

The Bank of Japan postponed

its decision to raise the key rate last week because of objections by the Finance Ministry, according to news reports.

Hashimoto welcomed the Central Bank decision as "a timely step to ensure flexible management of the monetary policy."

"It will help sustained growth of the domestic economy led by expansion of domestic demand and conform to Japan's policy of international co-operation," he said.

The government of Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu projected a 4.0 per cent growth for Japan's economy in fiscal 1990, beginning April 1. The growth rate for the current year is estimated at 4.6 per cent, up from the original government projection of 4.0 per cent.

The rise in the official discount rate will be followed by an increase in commercial interest rates.

The long-term credit bank and other major long-term credit banks said they will raise the

long-term prime rate by 0.3 point to 6.8 per cent, effective Jan 4.

The decision means the rate — the preferential interest rate on loans to creditworthy corporations — will rise for the third straight month.

Supported by brisk domestic demand amid steady economic expansion, foreign automakers will enjoy the sales boom in Japan in 1990, boosting their market share above 5.0 percent, the Japan Automobile Importers' Association predicted today.

The association's forecast said sales of imported cars in 1990 will total 240,000 units, reaching the market share of an estimated 5.71 per cent.

Sales this year were estimated at 180,000 units, up 34.7 per cent over last year, the association said.

The changing consumer taste favouring delux type cars and the active sales drive by car makers, coupled with the Japanese government's import promotion

policy, are encouraging factors behind the bullish outlook," a spokesman for the association said.

The official said imported car sales have been supported by the robust economic expansion led by brisk domestic demand and stable foreign exchange rates and crude oil prices.

The lowering of the automobile acquisition tax to a uniform 6.0 per cent under Japan's first sales tax, which went into force in April, also helped increase sales of high-priced imported cars in Japan.

Imported car sales have continued to increase from 1986 when their market share stood at 2.27 per cent.

Japanese automakers and trading firms have joined the imported car market by selling foreign-made vehicles through their nation-wide sales outlets.

The association called on foreign automakers and importers to improve after-sale service in Japan to further promote their sales in Japan.

Local banks' aggregate balance sheet on rise

Central Bank reviews monetary developments

KUWAIT, Dec 25, (Kuna): Summary of monetary developments released by the Central Bank of Kuwait said that the aggregate balance sheet of local banks, commercial and specialised, continued the growth which began in February 1989. In October 1989, this balance sheet increased by KD229 million (1.7 per cent) over the previous month to reach KD13424 million at the end of that month.

The increase in the aggregate balance sheet of local banks is attributed to the increase realised by the balance sheet of commercial banks (KD189 million) and by that of specialised banks (KD40 million), the report said.

Further, as the increase in local banks' aggregate balance sheet on the side of assets can be attributed to the increase of (KD169 million (1.7 per cent) in local assets and of KD60 million (1.9 per cent) in foreign assets, it can be attributed on the side of liabilities to the increase of KD121 million (1.1 per cent) in local liabilities and of KD108 million (6.4 per cent) in foreign liabilities.

The company said the number of workers employed at the plant will be increased to about 1,800 from the present 450 when full production begins.

Local procurement will exceed 70 per cent with engines supplied from the company's Aichi Engine Plant, the company said.

Mercedes-Benz Japan Co. said it has completed an after-sale service training centre at the German industrial centre in Yokohama, near Tokyo, to improve its service to local customers.

Interest Rates

Buying	Selling
US dollar	0.29227
Sw. Fr.	0.29342
DM	0.17141
F. Fr.	0.18843
U.S. £	0.05007
Jap. yen	0.0002286
Bah. dir.	0.77525
UAE Dir.	0.000157
S. Dir.	0.0001778
O. Dir.	0.00016
O. riyal	0.75894

KUWAIT, Dec 25, (Kuna): Following are the international currency rates as quoted by local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait today.

Federal funds rate dips

Bond market ends lower

NEW YORK, Dec 25, (UPI): The bond market closed lower Friday in a short pre-holiday trading session, responding to a Commerce Department report of an unexpected increase in November durable goods orders.

The benchmark long bond, the 8 1/8 of 2019, closed at 102 24-32 to yield 7.88 per cent, compared with 7.85 last week.

Treasury bond prices rose moderately during the week on easing by the Federal Reserve, analysts said. The federal funds rate dropped to 8.25 percent from 8.5 percent.

Salomon Brothers analysts, writing in comments on credit, said the easing was "likely only a stepping stone to an additional decline to 8 per cent in the next several weeks."

The Fed's action, however, had limited impact on the market because "easing has appeared increasingly inevitable," they said.

"This week's reports of personal income and consumption added to the recent array of economic data pointing to subpar but nonrecessionary

growth," Salomon Brothers said. "And broad price trends show inflation retreating decisively from its earlier peaks."

But "pockets of economic strength" such as the November durable goods report will contribute to continuing caution by the Fed, they added.

The Commerce Department's report, which sent treasury prices lower Friday, showed sharp increases in demand for transportation equipment pushed durable goods orders up a strong 5.1 percent to 130.7 billion in November, reversing a two-month slide.

It was the largest overall increase in durable goods orders since December 1988, when orders increased 7.4 per cent, the department said.

The report surprised several economists, who said Christie's chairman Lord Carrington said.

During the period, Christie's sales in the United States totalled \$387 million, up 64 per cent from \$358 million last year.

Christie's projected annual sales of more than \$2 billion for 1989.

The autumn season has been the most successful in Christie's 222 years of fine art auctioning.

Christie's chairman Lord Carrington said.

Meanwhile, Christie's sales of impressionist and modern art lifted its revenues for the autumn season to \$1.07 billion, a 49 per cent increase from \$716.4 million last year.

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Prehistoric rock art reveals desert's verdant past

DJANET, Algeria. (Reuters): Local people call the exquisite prehistoric rock paintings the crying cows.

Teardrops appear to roll down the face of cattle etched by ancient man in the midst of what is now a great desert.

Thousands of prehistoric etchings and paintings near this village in southeastern Algeria picture the Sahara as a land of rivers and lakes and lush savannah where antelope roamed.

Local lore says a shepherd etched the crying cows after travelling with his herd night and day to a spring he thought would quench their thirst.

Finding it dry — the result of desertification that began to transform the area some 4,000 years ago — he engraved in stone his cattle's grief as he watched them die one by one.

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cul-

tural Organisation (Unesco) proclaimed the Tassili region's 15,000 drawings and paintings the world's finest prehistoric open-air art museum.

Vivid coloured paintings of astonishing grace and detail show herds of cattle led to pasture, negroid figures dancing and hunting rabbits, antelopes and wild sheep.

"There were lakes full of fish, powerful rivers and green steppes and savannah," said Lamine Bencherif, director of the Tassili National Park, established in 1972 to protect the paintings and surrounding scenery.

"Drawings of elephants and rhinoceros presuppose the existence of rich vegetation that could produce the tons of forage they need."

Access to the paintings, some of which date to 8,000 B.C., is by arduous climb of at least two hours up the Tassili escarpment

where the wind and sand have sculpted stunning peaks and caves in the sedimented sandstone.

Once surmounted, the plateau is a moonscape of jet-black rock, forests of stone pillars and dry river valleys where the sparse vegetation to this day evokes the verdant past.

French officers who occupied the territory until Algerian independence in 1962 warned each other of the "Medusa effect" of spooky eroded peaks and pillars that suggest human forms.

Discovery of the Tassili paintings by a French lieutenant in 1933 revolutionised existing conceptions of the origins of art and Henri Lhote, the French archaeologist who made the first systematic study of them in the 1950s, called them worthy of the best schools of painting.

"We tend to think of prehistoric man as

savages, but they were absolutely not," said Malika Hached, the park's deputy director.

"They produced real art. The animals were admirably proportioned, the figurative designs were perfect. Detail is so fine we sometimes see the buttons on the people's hats."

Lhote established four distinct periods. The earliest, dating from roughly 8,000 to 5,000 BC, show bizarre Martian-looking figures with round heads, striped halos and giant clumsy hands.

They presumably reflected an ancient magical or religious belief.

A period of naturalist painting lasting until around 2,000 BC shows endless hunting, dancing and domestic scenes in bright greens, yellows and reds.

One spectacular painting at Jabreen, some 15 km (10 miles) from Djebel, shows black women clad in loincloths dancing

around a bull in some ancient ritual, arms jutting outward and poised on hips.

Elsewhere, muscular red men leap into the air, fire arrows at gazelles or bend down as if to pick up grains.

A detailed portrait of what appears to be a group of herders on the move suggests they carried with them frames of wooden huts like the modern-day Peuls of West Africa.

Crocodiles, giraffes, elephants and rhinoceros abound in depictions of what the artist saw around him.

Changes in polar ice masses and stratospheric winds gradually deprived the region of rain. Subsequent paintings document the progression of the desert as the cows disappeared and horses, then camels, became the primary subjects.

The horse period shows chariots similar to the ones chronicled by ancient Egyptians, who reported fierce battles with their neigh-

bours to the west.

Writing first appeared on the Tassili rock around 500 BC in the ancient Tifinagh script, a 24-character alphabet of dots, circles and lines still used by the local Touareg tribe.

Local people say they can read the script but do not understand the oldest messages, suggesting they were written in a Berber tongue even older than their current dialect.

Tassili N'Ajjer means plateau of rivers in the Touareg language and the odd lava-tan clump, olive tree or cypress grove — adapted over centuries to the desert — are eerie reminders of its former Mediterranean-type climate. Some of the cypresses are 3,000 years old, Bencherif said.

The park is home to some 60 bird species, wild sheep, gazelle, fox and partridge. But lack of water has ended human habitation of the plateau where the cows once grazed.

Lady shares stage with gorillas



Mother and son

A mother and son watch burning candles outside a Manila church yesterday before a Christmas Eve mass. The Roman Catholic church has asked Filipinos to light candles and pray for peace after this month's bloody coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino. (Reuters wirephoto)

New plays take centre-stage London changes norm

LONDON. (AP): New plays are about to take centre-stage in London as the theatre capital moves away from the star-studded revivals and classic productions that have dominated recent seasons.

Alan Ayckbourn, Michael Frayn, and Simon Gray are three of the well-known English dramatists who will open new plays on London's commercial West End in the first six months of 1990.

Howard Barker and David Hare, two well-known leftists

playwrights, will premiere three plays between them in London's government-subsidised theatres.

Barker kicks off with two plays starting performances Jan 4: "Seven Lears," at the Royal Court, which takes its title from Shakespeare's "King Lear," and "Scenes From An Execution," at the Almeida.

The latter brings two-time Oscar winner Glenda Jackson back to the London stage following her performance this fall in a Los Angeles stage revival of Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?"

The new play casts her as a painter in Renaissance Venice.

Feb 8 sees the bow at the Royal National Theatre of "Racing Demon," David Hare's play about four south London clergymen. The show marks Hare's first play since his 1988 "The Secret Rapture," which had a long run at the national but folded quickly this fall on Broadway.

Alan Ayckbourn's "Man Of The Moment," the prolific author's 36th play, opens Feb 14, with

Michael Gambon heading the cast.

"It's my play with a swimming pool," Ayckbourn, 50, said in an interview, referring to the setting for one of the scenes.

He said the play's theme was "what the media selects from people."

"I'm always amazed that it picks out the people it likes, and the people who might be nice if leaves alone," he said. "Some of the nice people on TV are the nastiest people in real life."

"Look Look," Michael Frayn's first completely new play since his 1984 "Benefactors," opens April 17 at the Aldwych. The dramatist has been busier of late translating and adapting the plays of Anton Chekhov and writing for TV.

Frayn, who had Broadway successes with both "Benefactors" and "Noises Off," was reluctant to give away his new play's plot.

"Silence is what one had better preserve at this point," he said. The play stars Stephen Fry and Serena Gordon and is directed by Mike Cakrent ("Me And My Girl").

Simon Gray, who wrote "Butley" and "The Common Pursuit," is expected to have a new play on the West End by the summer, and John Osborne and Christopher Hampton are two other noted playwrights readying new works.

The flurry of new writing contrasts with 1988 and 1989, when the primary theatrical excitement came from seeing stars do the classics — Vanessa Redgrave in "Oedipus Descending," and Dustin Hoffman in "The Merchant Of Venice," to name two London productions that travelled to Broadway.

Joumas started again and for two years has been catering to whoever can afford it. He still struggle to find ingredients for the Arabic and European cuisine.

When the country opened its northern border, North Yemenis came streaming in to take advantage of the South's relaxed alcohol rules. Their custom has since fallen off, but the elimination of visa rules in mid-November promises to bring them back.

Other habits of Nashwan's tables include Arab diplomats and wealthier South Yemenis who have worked outside the country.

But the thousands of Eastern bloc diplomats and advisers in Aden, with their meagre salaries, seldom taste the expensive pleasures of the Nashwan.

Apart from the PFLP club owners there are about 1,000 Palestinian teachers, embassy staff and commandos remain.

Many Palestine Liberation Organisation fighters fled to South Yemen when the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982 but now only 70 commandos remain.

Palestine Charge D'Affaires Mohammed Abu Shanab said they live with their families at a training camp outside town.



Dutch philosophers offer clients wisdom of sages

AMSTERDAM. (Reuters): If you think no psychologist can help you cope with life, maybe a philosopher can.

In the Netherlands, philosophy graduates are opening private practices and charging clients up to 100 guilders (\$30) an hour to kick around ideas.

"There's a new generation of philosophers who want to take part in society, not just work in an ivory tower. We are making use of philosophical tradition to exchange thoughts with clients over whatever subject they want," explained Ad Hoogendijk.

One of the first Dutch philosophers to set up a practice in 1987, he has been joined by a dozen who talk with clients about everything from the meaning of

life to a career change.

Hoogendijk predicted the number would jump to about 100 in three years.

Unlike some psychologists, practicing philosophers do not try to probe deep into the past of the individual to understand childhood ingrained behaviour or subconscious actions and suggest modifications.

Rather, they try to bring the wisdom of philosophy to help people see the issues that trouble them from a new perspective.

"I try to help people answer very basic questions like: Who are you? What do you want? It's a kind of re-orientation to structure their desires," explained Hoogendijk in an interview.

I don't try and fit a person into a pre-existing theory but take what they say about themselves at face value and try to act as midwife to let them articulate what they have inside," he explained in his Amsterdam office.

About 80 per cent of his clients are at a major crossroads — businessmen worried about approaching retirement, women upset when their grown children leave home, and youths unsure what to study at university.

"I ask people to make up a life plan of their desires and ideals that can be the basis of a revitalisation plan. Often people have made choices in life on the basis of what they think is available, not on their ideals," Hoogendijk said.

He usually meets a client for about four or five sessions.

While a psychologist faced with a patient saying he felt more sadness than other people might recommend years of treatment for depression, Hoogendijk uses another tack.

Faced with just such a client, he tried to offer him a perspective on his views, engaging in discussion about the high value modern culture places on happiness and how thinkers in the past have put value on melancholia.

He does not talk about the fine points of Aristotelian logic or Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism.

But he said his philosophical training had helped turn asking questions into his key tool and his thinking has been enriched by the sages he has read.

"There is a famous saying that Plato and Aristotle said it all, and it's true," he noted. But his reading of Spinoza, Marcuse, Karl Marx and Hannah Arendt have also informed his counselling, he said.

Hoogendijk came to the idea of starting a philosophical practice from his contact with a colleague, Gerd Achenthal, who first set up an office in 1981 in the Cologne suburb of Refrath in West Germany.

But the idea has caught on more in the Netherlands than in West Germany, he said.

One of his colleagues Eite Veening

said he began his practice in the northern city of Groningen in 1987 because he was disturbed by "how much sloppy thinking there was around."

He said he was not interested in "curing" patients by helping them sort out their emotions but in helping them intellectually puzzle out their values and thought process.

"I try to get people to understand their own ethics and what the best choice would be for them in a situation," said Veening.

"If you can get yourself to do what is best or not is another thing. If you find you can't, well then maybe that's more a matter for a psychologist," he explained.

Happy birthday



Shohei Yamamura turned 6 on December 17.



Rowshan Bagum turns 10 on December 25.



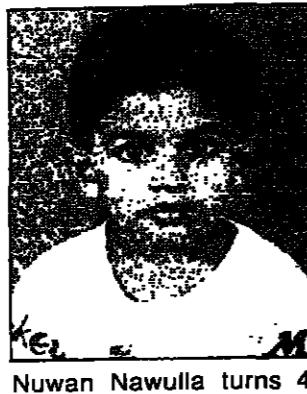
Andrew Edwar turned 1 on December 24.



Sajid turns 4 on December 24.



Ero Ranawaka turns 1 today December 26



Nuwan Nawulla turns 4 today December 26



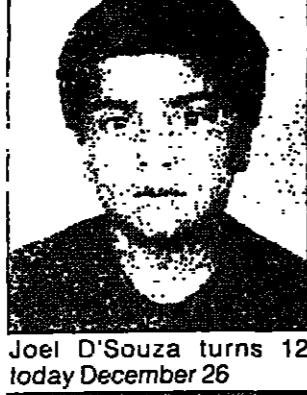
Anshul Kumar turned 2 on December 22



Jessica Coelho turned 7 on December 23



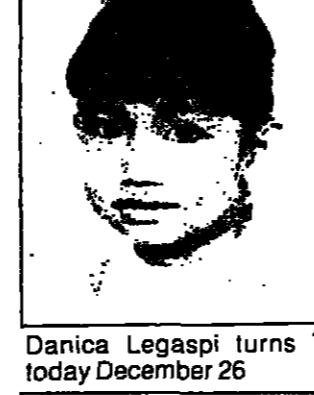
Roy Noronha turned 2 on December 22



Joel D'Souza turns 12 today December 26

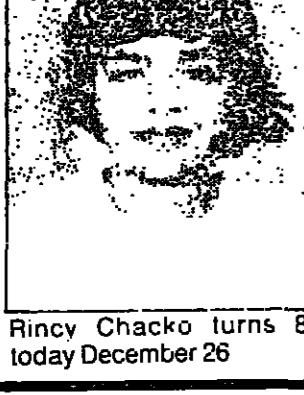


Danica Legaspi turns 7 today December 26

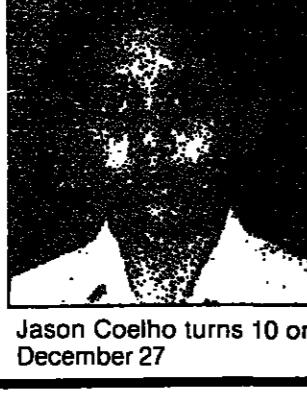


Jason Gonsalves turns 6 on December 23.

Manal Al Otabi turns 9 on December 24.



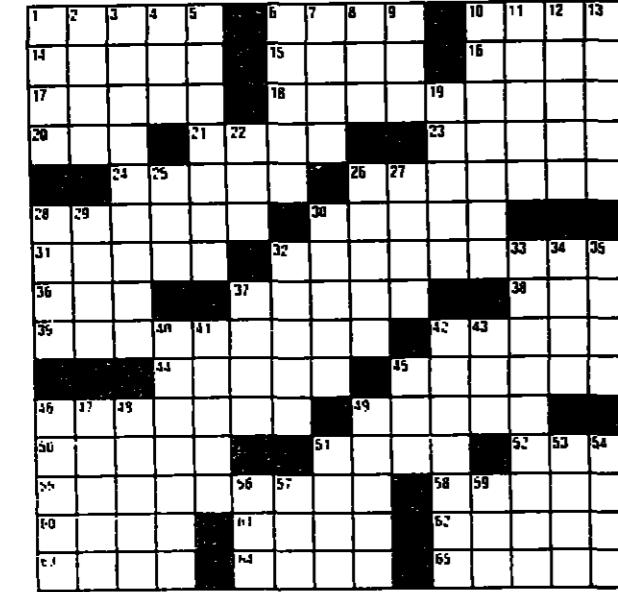
Rincy Chacko turns 8 today December 26



Jayson Gonsalves turns 6 on December 23.



TODAY'S CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1. Telling
- 5. Shot
- 10. At the plate. Abb.
- 14. African people
- 15. Supernatural power
- 16. Hills or dragon
- 17. - Allen
- 18. No. 3
- 20. Models
- 21. Anatomical notebook
- 22. Clever
- 23. Rich
- 26. Adventurous
- 28. People
- 30. Kitchen implement
- 31. Cal. cont.
- 32. Taking a guess
- 36. Ending for -er
- 37. West Side Story heroine
- 38. Factor of action leading
- 39. Like some Hitchcock villains
- 42. Terra --
- 44. Browsing event
- 45. Burning animal
- 46. Charged
- 49. American author Bret
- 50. Those not of the clergy
- 51. Person supernatural being
- 52. Parrot
- 55. Aster
- 58. Grandmas
- 60. Yearn
- 61. Fotouri
- 62. One's pledged word

DOWN

- 63. Understands for one
- 65. Hold for anchor cable
- 66. Horn sound
- 67. Shakespeare, one
- 68. Hole for anchor cable
- 69. Cabinet
- 70. Filled
- 71. In excess
- 72. Aware of
- 73. Eden dweller
- 74. One of a pair
- 75. Attuned
- 76. RR depot
- 77. Dawn
- 78. Hill
- 79. Walking stick
- 80. Collection of anecdotes
- 81. Irate
- 82. Swimmers
- 83. Detect
- 84. River in SE Ontario
- 85. Foliques
- 86. Japanese-American
- 87. Wind dir.
- 88. Diving seabird
- 89. Architectural style
- 90. Columnist Bombeck
- 91. Snacks
- 92. Tennis great
- 93. A Reiner
- 94. Guido note
- 95. Military macaw

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
THE SEASON FOR GIVING

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

- ♦ K 2
- ♦ K 7 6 4
- ♦ Q 9 3 2
- ♦ A 10 9

WEST

- ♦ J 8 7 4
- ♦ Q 8 3
- ♦ 10 7
- ♦ 8 7 6 5

EAST

- ♦ 10 9 6 5 3
- ♦ J 10 9 5
- ♦ 4
- ♦ K J 2

SOUTH

- ♦ A Q
- ♦ A 2
- ♦ A K J 8 6 5
- ♦ Q 4 3

The bidding:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 Pass

3 NT Pass 4 Pass

6 Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Seven of diamonds.

The bidding: The holidays are upon us—first Hanukkah, then Christmas. The writers and editors of this column wish all our readers felicitations for the season.

It's the season for giving, and South started early when he picked up this hand. North's bid of four diamonds was a slam try. Since there was no way North could have enough to invite a slam without either first or second-round club control, South went directly to the six

diamonds. Unwilling to lead from his major-suit honors, West hit upon the safe lead of a trump. Dummy's spade holding was unfortunate. Because of the duplication in that suit, declarer needed to hold his club losers to one to land the slam.

The percentage play in the club suit was, taken in isolation, clear—two finesses. So after drawing a second trump, declarer ran the queen of clubs. That lost to the king, and East returned a spade. Declarer won and repeated the finesse—down one.

Finding West with one of the two club honors was a 3-to-1 shot. However, with a little bit of preparation, declarer could have raised those odds to a sure thing.

Declarer should win the trump, draw a second round and then cash the ace and king of hearts. After ruffing a heart, declarer returns to dummy with the king of spades and ruffs the remaining heart. To complete the strip, declarer cashes the ace of spades.

Now declarer runs the queen of clubs, and East is helpless. In with the king, he must either yield a ruff-stuff or lead a club into dummy's A-10 tenace. Either way, the slam is in the bag.

THE WIZARD OF ID



By Brant Parker and Johnny Hart

B.C.

WHAT KIND?



By Johnny Hart

YOUR STARS



Aries (March 20 - April 18)

Your partner could well be a rather bad mood, but do not allow yourself to take offence. Give your sense of humour a bit of practice. You would do well to eat more sparingly. Be magnanimous.



Cancer (June 21 - July 21)

You are rather too liable to leave things until the last minute. Not everything will be to your liking but you should not make an issue of it. Do try to be little less intolerant. Be steadfast.



Leo (July 22 - Aug 21)

You will be reluctant to do something that has to be done. A little will power will suffice to overcome this inclination. Take good care of your health without behaving as though very small aches and pain were unbearable.



Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Pay a little more attention to what others are thinking and saying. Make sure you are not making a nuisance of yourself. An old friend will appreciate your support and comfort. Be attentive.



Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

If you have made a mistake admit it, rather than trying to deny that you have made it. Make sure you get all the rest you need and take sufficient none too violent exercise. Beware when on the road. Be forgiving.



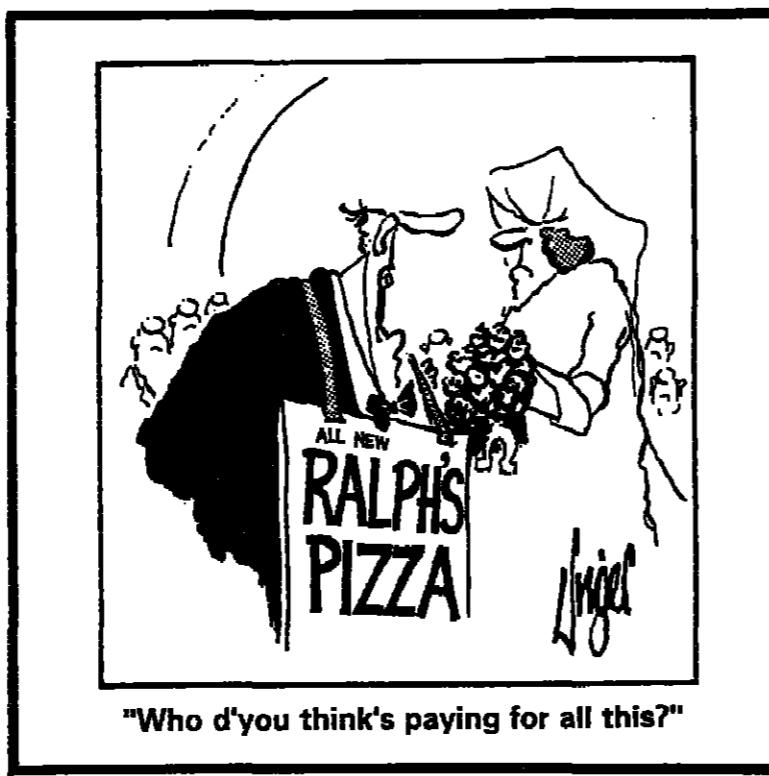
Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Something you did not expect to happen will, it will be better than it could have been. You should not allow too much lumber to accumulate. Try to take things more in your stride. Be amenable.



Pisces (Feb 19 - March 19)

Whilst you might have some good luck do not rely upon it. Show a little more sympathy to a friend who is going through a bad patch. This is not time to take things for granted. Be sincere.



SPORTS**Oldest baseball player turns 100**

DULUTH, Minnesota, Dec 25. (AP): The oldest living former major league baseball player celebrated his 100th birthday yesterday, 77 years after playing in his only season.

"Happy 100th birthday to the oldest Yankee" was the inscription on the cake presented to Paul F. Otis Sr at the Chris Jensen Nursing Home, where he lives.

"He's in good spirits," said his son, Paul Otis Jr., 71. "He's been getting calls from all over the country wanting information and autographs and all this sort of thing."

One of the callers was Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent.

"We found out that my father was a Williams College graduate, just like the commissioner," Otis said. "(Vincent) said he would send him a letter."

Earlier in the week, the elder Otis received a telegram from Yankee's owner George Steinbrenner.

"Happy Birthday, Paul," the telegram said. "My warmest wishes for a happy and healthy New Year. Hope you will follow the Yankees this year."

According to research by Jim Ogle of the New York Yankees Alumni Association, Otis will be only the third ex-ballplayer ever to reach the century mark. Ralph Darvin Miller, who played with Brooklyn in 1889 and Baltimore in 1899, died at age 100 in 1973. John Francis Daley, a shortstop with the St Louis Browns in 1912, was 101 when he died in 1958.

Otis was "discovered" six years ago when Ogle was lining up ex-players for the Yankees' old timers' game.

"I don't know how they found me, but they invited me to come to New York and I went," Otis said recently. "I was told a fellow named Chet Hoff had been the oldest living ex-Yankee, but he had died, and they were trying to determine who was next-oldest."

The fact is, Hoff was a year-and-a-half younger than Otis.

If Otis had been overlooked, it would have been understandable. He spent just a month with the Yankees' predecessors, the New York Highlanders, in 1912. He played only briefly and was sent to the Minors. He broke his ankle, finishing his playing career, and he came to Duluth that fall. He soon entered the insurance business, never looking back at the Diamond.

Otis was just 1-for-20 in his Major League career.

Otis is confined to a wheelchair most of the time. A mild stroke last summer has affected his speech slightly as well as the dexterity in his right hand. He can still oblige autograph-seekers, however, and hardly a week passes without such a request.

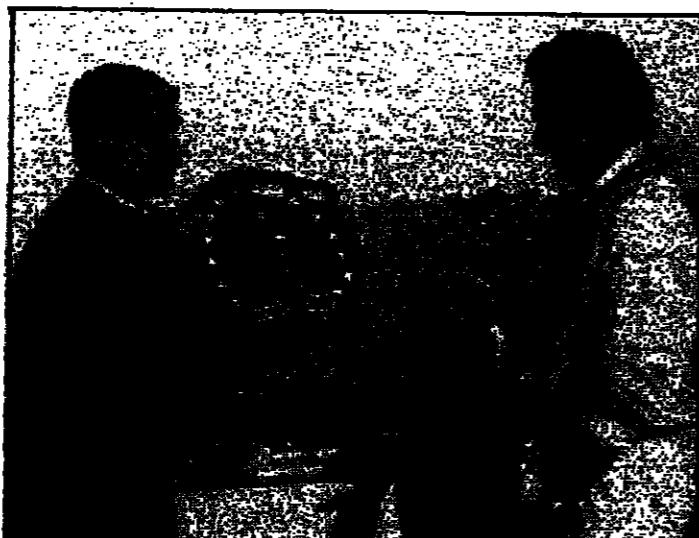
The younger Otis said his father still has the glove and cap he wore as a Major Leaguer and would consider giving it to the baseball Hall of Fame.

"They haven't asked," Otis said. "But I'm sure dad wouldn't mind donating them."

Jugoplastika lead

MADRID, Spain, Dec 25. (AP): Jugoplastika of Yugoslavia lead the 25th Christmas basketball tournament here after it defeated Aris Salónica of Greece 75-68 in the second day of games yesterday.

Earlier in the day, host team Real Madrid defeated Maccabi of Tel Aviv 111-94.

**Siddique lose by five wickets
Evergreen clinch title**

Asad Baig (right) receives the trophy.



Shabbir, Man of the Match, receives his prize.

EVERGREEN Cricketers, led by Asad Baig, rallied to defeat Siddique Cricketers to win the Shabbir Memorial Trophy at the EPI Ground on Friday.

After winning the toss, Siddique's skipper Arif elected to bat and opened the innings alongside Afzal. Evergreen's bowling was opened by experienced Shabbir who uprooted Arif's stumps in the first over.

Asad Baig made an early bowling change and this paid off as Shabbir caught Afzal (15) off Shehzad and Anjum Raza removed Amjad and Tariq to leave Siddique Cricketers reeling at four for just 43 runs.

The fifth wicket pair of Shahid and Rauf stopped the rot and took their team to 106 after 25 overs without any further loss at the water break. When Anjum Raza had completed his spell of two for 49 Asad Baig brought himself on and again the decision paid quick dividends as he had Rauf caught by Sadaqat at mid-wicket for 54 runs. His innings contained a six and five boundaries.

Sadaqat held another beautiful catch off Shabbir's bowling to dismiss Mukesh. Amjad Ameen became the second victim of Asad Baig when he was superbly caught by Razak. At the other end Shahid, who had long stay at the wicket, lost his patience and was runout for 74 which contained a six but no boundaries. When Asad Baig took marvellous catch at mid-off to dismiss Asif Iqbal it was all over for Siddique with the total 189 in 40.5 overs.

For Evergreen, the bowling honours were shared by Shabbir, Shehzad, Asad Baig and Anjum Raza who had two wickets each at the cost of 28, 29, 33 and 49 runs respectively.

Evergreen, needing just 4.25 runs per over, opened their innings through Iqbal Jr and A. Razzaq but the latter was caught off Malik for only four runs. Iqbal Jr who was in full swing also became medium-pacer Malik's second victim when he was caught at silly mid-on by Mukesh after scoring a stylish 43. Then Shabbir and Amjad Malik added valuable 70 runs between them and total being 124 Amjad Malik was run out for 28 runs.

Anjum Raza rendered good support to Shabbir and hit three boundaries to score 23 runs when he was bowled by Amjad Ameen. Shabbir was well taken by substitute fielder Sharafat, again off Amjad Ameen after playing disciplined knock of 58 runs but by then the victory was just 16 runs away.

Waqar Zaidi and Jamil got the remaining runs to ensure a well-deserved victory with five wickets and eight overs to spare.

At the end of the match chief guest Hemant Bhasin gave away the prizes. Asad Baig was presented with the Shabbir Memorial Trophy instituted in the name of well-known cricketer Shabbir who died on the cricket field. The match was supervised by Haji Sarfraz and Tehzeeb-Ul-Hassan.



The victorious Evergreen squad with other officials



Evergreen's Shehzad Ahmad (left) and Amjad Malik collect their awards.

Everything is OK, says athletics boss

MONTE CARLO, Monaco, Dec 25. (AP): Primo Nebiolo has weathered the storm, convinced that his empire of amateur sports is stronger than ever as a decade of growth and growing pains comes to an end.

The head of several top-level sports organisations, including the powerful International Amateur Athletic Federation, Nebiolo says criticism of his leadership has not changed the way he does business.

"We believe that we have done good things," Nebiolo said. "We are convinced that our strategy was good. And we have the results."

A lawyer and business leader from Turin, Italy, Nebiolo has had a rugged year.

Last spring, prosecutors in Rome investigated his involvement in alleged corruption in sponsorship and promotion deals in Italy. He was cleared of any wrongdoing.

Over the summer, efforts were made to oust him as president of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, the umbrella organisation that distributes money from multimillion-dollar television contracts for the Games. Critics said he ran the organisation like a dictator, but no challenger could be found and Nebiolo won re-election at a special meeting in October.

Throughout the year, Nebiolo has been shadowed by another ghost — the fix of the long jump at the 1987 World Track and Field Championships in Rome, where officials wrongly gave the bronze medal to Italy's Giovanni Evangelisti. Investigators said they found no evidence that Nebiolo was involved in the rigging, although he was criticised

for failing to take immediate action.

There also has been the aftershock of the biggest scandal in Olympic history — the drug case of sprinter Ben Johnson. Although the IAAF last September voted to strip Johnson of his world records, critics argue that it could have done more to prevent doping from becoming so widespread.

For Nebiolo, all this sniping is the price of success.

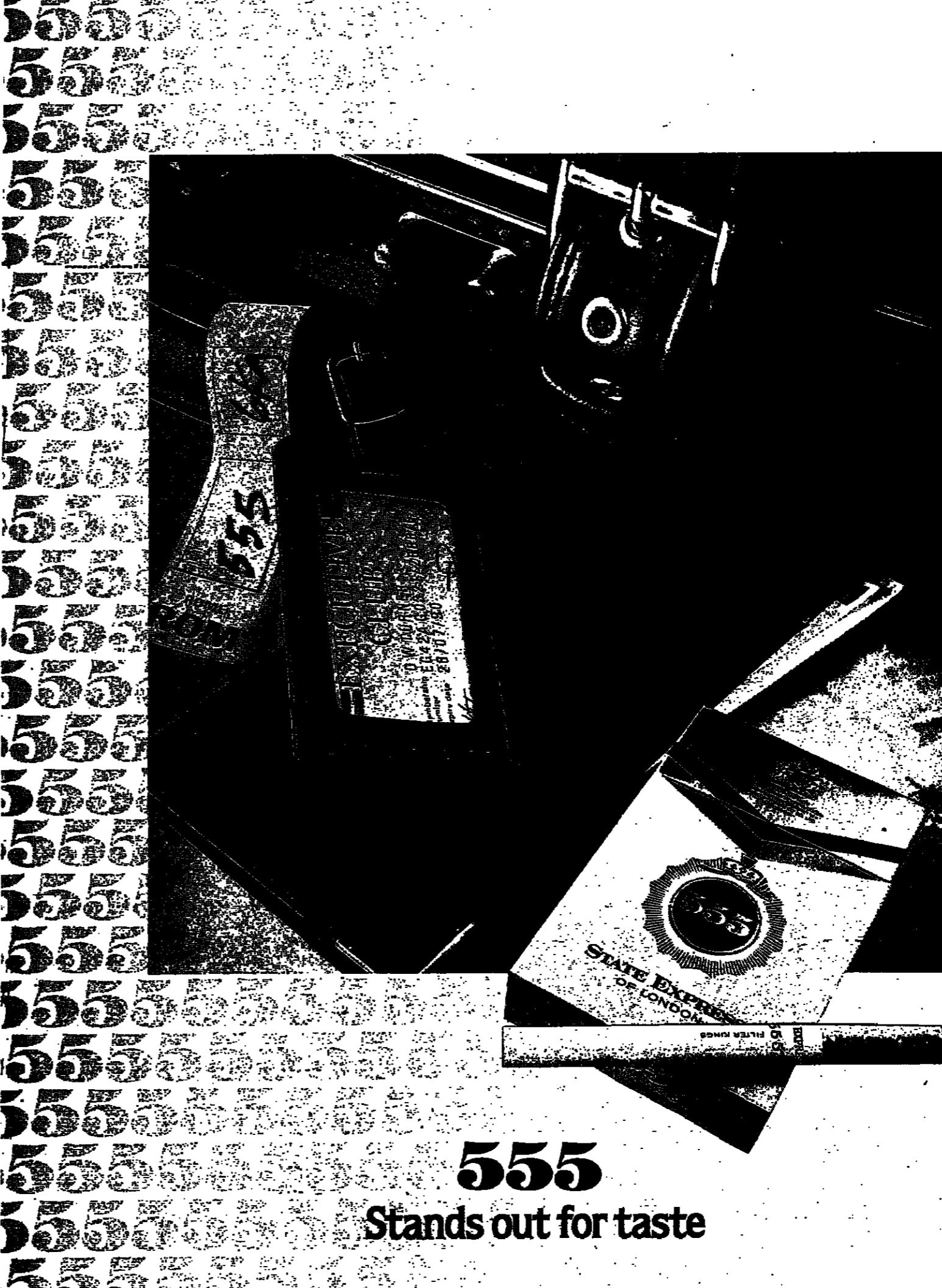
"When an organisation becomes more important and bigger and well known, always there are some critics, no?" he said. "Because you are well known, you are not ignored."

In an interview prior to the annual awards ceremony for the year's top track and field performers, Nebiolo said that he had helped build the IAAF into a rich and powerful organisation that was helping athletes around the world as the place of sports in society changed.

Sports activity is becoming more and more important in life, and athletics is becoming more and more interesting, more and more forward-looking," he said. "We have a long season in summer and a good season in winter, and we have made a big programme of events."

The creation of events such as the world indoor and outdoor championships, World Cup races for the marathon and race-walking and the World Cup team competition mean track is challenging soccer's popularity, he said.

"For our next world championships in Tokyo in 1991, organisers are selling \$35 million worth of tickets — that is \$3 million a day," he said, with television coverage in 140 countries.



Government Warning: Smoking is a major cause of cancer and diseases of the lungs, heart and arteries.



Sharif (left) receives the trophy for the Pakistan ambassador.

Cantt capture crown

CANTT Cricket Club beat Pakistan Aid Committee Cricket Club (PACC) by 108 runs in the final of Quaid-e-Azam trophy cricket tournament to take the title at the Al Nasr stadium on Friday.

Cantt opted to make first use of the wicket after winning the toss on a wet and soft

grassy ground. Cantt lost their first wicket at 14 but newcomer Aslam Fani started hitting all the PACC bowlers to pull Cantt out of trouble.

Cantt lost their second wicket at 61 but Aslam Fani continued his onslaught. Wickets kept falling at regular

intervals but Aslam kept his cool and managed to score 96 runs before he was dismissed.

He hit 14 fours as Cantt managed 173 in 25 overs. Siraj hit 25 runs for Cantt while Daryl chipped in with 15.

For PACC, Rashid was the main wicket-taker with five for 25 while Khalid got two and Shakeel one.

PACC got into trouble from

the start of their innings, losing their skipper in the second over when the score was only 7.

The fall of this wicket was the start of a slide as Cantt skipper Sharif took four wickets in six balls to head PACC towards disaster.

PACC could not last long

and were all out for 63 with

Tanveer scoring 17 to be the only one to reach the double figures.

Sharif finished with four

wickets for eight while Shahid

took 2 for 9 while Noor, Rizvi

and Abbas got one wicket each. Aslam Fani took the Man of the Match award.

The Pakistani Ambassador to Kuwait, Zahid Saeed, presented the trophy to the Cantt skipper.

Bell lifts Rams into playoffs

Eagles win wild-card spot

PHILADELPHIA, Dec 25, (AP): Running back Anthony Toney ran and caught passes for 130 yards yesterday as the Philadelphia Eagles clinched a wild-card spot in the NFC playoffs with a 31-14 victory over the Phoenix Cardinals.

The Eagles boosted their record to 11-5 and will host a wild-card playoff game Dec 31 against the Los Angeles Rams.

Phoenix lost its sixth straight and finished 5-11, but the Cardinals didn't pack it in against Philadelphia. They led 7-0 and trailed by only a touchdown late into the third quarter.

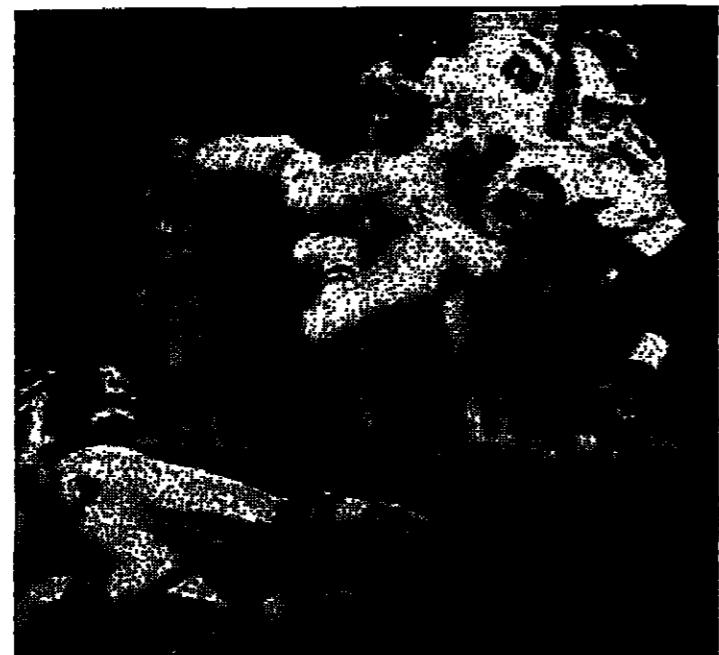
Toney carried 17 times for 82 yards and caught five passes for 48 as the Eagles reached the playoffs for the second straight season.

Randall Cunningham led the Eagles offense with 19 of 36 for 162 yards and a touchdown passing, and 41 yards rushing.

He became the first quarterback in the modern era to lead his team in rushing three straight years. Cunningham scrambled for 641 yards for the season.

Philadelphia rushed for a season-high 267 yards yesterday. The Eagles defense added four sacks for a total of 62, erasing the club season record of 60 set in 1984.

Linebacker Byron Evans



Cunningham (in the air) led Eagles offense.

intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble.

Rams 24, Patriots 20

Greg Bell capped a 210-yard rushing day with a 3-yard touchdown run with 1:55 left that lifted the Los Angeles Rams to a 24-20 victory over the New England Patriots and into the NFL

playoffs. After Bell scored, the Patriots moved from their 37-yard line to a first down at the Rams 4 with

nine seconds left. But Steve Grogan overthrew Irving Fryar with 5 seconds left, a wide-open Eric Sievers with one second left and Hart Lee Dykes at the back of the end zone as time ran out.

Packers 20, Cowboys 10

Dan Majkowski threw two touchdown passes and the Green Bay Packers stayed alive in the playoff chase with a 20-10 victory over the Dallas Cowboys, who tied the NFL record for most losses in a season at 15.

Green Bay's 10-4 record was its best in 17 years while Dallas suffered through a 1-15 campaign in Jimmy Johnson's rookie year as coach. It was the 14th consecutive home loss for Dallas, an NFL record.

The packers can win the NFC central if Minnesota loses to Cincinnati this evening in Minneapolis.

Saints 41, Colts 6

John Fourcade passed for two touchdowns and ran for one leading New Orleans to a 41-6 victory over Indianapolis that ended the Colts' playoff hopes and gave the Saints an unprecedented third straight winning season.

Results

Kansas City 27 Miami Dolphins 24
New York 34 L.A. Raiders 17
New Orleans 41 Indianapolis 17
L.A. Rams 24 New E. Patriots 20
Green Bay 20 Dallas 10

Philadelphia 31 Phoenix 14
Pittsburgh 31 Tampa Bay 22
Detroit 31 Atlanta 24
San Diego 19 Denver 16
San Francisco 26 Chicago 0

Standings

Standings of National Football League teams after games played yesterday (tablets under won, lost, tied, points for, against):

American Conference

Eastern Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
X-Buffalo	9	7	0	409	317
Miami	8	8	0	331	379
Indians	8	8	0	298	301
New England	5	11	0	297	391
N.Y.Jets	4	12	0	253	411

Central Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
X-Cleveland	9	6	1	334	244
Houston	9	7	0	365	412
Pittsburgh	9	7	0	265	326
Cincinnati	8	7	0	383	256

Western Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
X-Denver	11	5	0	362	226
L.A.Raiders	8	8	0	315	297
Kansas City	8	7	0	318	282
Seattle	7	8	0	241	327
San Diego	6	10	0	266	290

National Conference

Eastern Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
X-N.Y.Giants	12	4	0	368	252
Y-Philadelphia	11	5	0	342	274
Washington	10	6	0	368	326
Phoenix	5	11	0	258	377
Dallas	1	12	0	204	393

Central Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Green Bay	10	5	0	362	356
Minnesota	9	6	0	322	254
Detroit	7	9	0	312	364
Chicago	6	10	0	358	377
Tampa Bay	5	11	0	320	419

Western Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
X-San Francisco	14	2	0	442	253
Y-L.A.Raiders	14	3	0	426	344
New Orleans	9	7	0	386	301
Atlanta	3	13	0	279	437

X-clashed division title

Y-clashed wild-card berth

Van Basten takes top European award again

PARIS, Dec 25, (Reuters): AC Milan's peerless Dutch striker Marco van Basten won the European Footballer of the Year award for the second year in a row yesterday.

The elegant Dutch sharpshooter led an AC Milan clean sweep of the top three places, also for the second year in succession, in the annual poll conducted by the weekly France Football.

He gained 119 points ahead of Italian sweeper Franco Baresi (80) and midfielder and fellow-Dutchman Frank Rijkaard (43).

Van Basten was given top place in 18 of the 27 votes by France's football panel of sports journalists from different European countries.

The Dutchman, who scored twice as AC Milan beat Steaua Bucharest 4-0 in the European Cup final in May, is also a key figure in the Dutch national team which qualified ahead of West Germany for next year's World Cup finals in Italy.

It was the third year in a row that the prestigious trophy went to a Dutch player with AC Milan. Rund Gullit, who scored the other two goals in this year's European Cup final but who missed most of the year with injury, won it in 1987.

Gullit, second last year ahead of Rijkaard, after the Netherlands won the European championship, placed seventh this time.

The vote closed a year of unprecedented success for AC Milan, who followed their European Cup triumph with a victory over Barcelona to win the Super Cup and a triumph against Atletico Nacional of Colombia in the World Club Cup.

In all, six players with Milan



Van Basten (left): European Footballer of the Year

Netherlands 16.

3. George Hagi (Steaua Bucharest and Romania) 11; Jürgen Klinsmann (Inter Milan and West Germany) 11.

10. Jean-Pierre Papin (Marseille and France) 10; Michel Platini (France) 10.

In a separate poll to choose the best player of the last 30 years, Alfredo di Stefano, formerly of Real Madrid and Spain, came out on top.

He beat Dutchman Johan Cruyff and Michel Platini of France into second and third places. Only the six players who have twice won France football's "Ballon d'Or" European Footballer of the Year award were eligible.

Franz Beckenbauer of West Germany was fourth, England's Kevin Keegan fifth and a second West German Karl-Heinz Rummenigge was sixth.

Largent steps into retirement

SEATTLE, Dec 25, (AP): Steve Largent spent the first day of the rest of his life having a great time with his four children.

"My mom always asked when I'd get a real job, and I think that time has come," Largent said yesterday, a day after he stepped into retirement following his last game for the Seattle Seahawks.

"My goal now is to be a great dad, more than being a great receiver or football player. That's what I've always prayed about and that will be the measure I'll hold to my own life."

The laughter of youngsters in the Largent home was evidence that he was off to a great start.

In one respect, being home for the holidays was not new.

"This Christmas really won't feel that much different from any year that the Seahawks didn't make the playoffs," Largent said. "I don't think things will feel different until it's time to get ready for practice in the spring or reporting in the summer. By then, I'm sure it will sink in that I won't be part of it."

Some 7,000 fans showed up at a party to say goodbye to Largent Saturday night.

"I wish I was as neat as you all think I am but I'm not," Largent told the capacity crowd at the Washington State Convention Center.

Seattle's homeless will benefit from the \$70,000 the party produced, including \$5,000 given by Largent's teammates.

"I'm overwhelmed by all of this," Largent said.

Largent, the record-setting wide receiver of the Seahawks, went out in a losing game, a 29-0 beating from the Washington Redskins in the Kingdom Saturday afternoon.

But to those at the party, and those who paid tribute to him in messages, he was anything but a loser.

"You are one of those people who really have made a difference," President Bush told Largent by videotape. "I offer my heartfelt thanks not only from the community of Seattle but from this president."

"Several times when I've watched you, I wanted to shout, 'win one for the Gipper,'" former President Reagan said in another videotaped message. "You are truly a role model for the rest of us."

Largent, 35, never went to a Super Bowl but he became the favorite player of Seahawks fans, who admired him for his overachievements on the field and his humble demeanor off it.

Mike Haynes, Los Angeles Raiders defensive back, sent Largent a telegram.

"For a guy too slow and too short, you sure fooled a lot of people," Haynes wrote.

That was the book on Largent — too slow, too small and too short.

BRIDGE

RESULTS of the Hubra Bridge Club game held on Saturday:
N/S
1. S. Aruna & Narendra Shah
2. Sultan Ali & Shanti
3. El Baz & Sabek
E/W
1. Rasem & Arefeh
2. Dr. Naeem & Rida
3. Sapre & Gajjar

Paris-Dakar Rally gets under way

Laffite drops out before start

PARIS, Dec 25, (Reuters): More than 400 cars, lorries and motorcycles set off today for a three-week, 11,000-km trek through the desert as the 12th annual Paris-Dakar Rally got under way.

Last year's winner Ari Vatanen of Finland is the clear favourite for a third personal success and a fourth in a row for Peugeot who have already said this will be their last Paris-Dakar because they intend to concentrate on the World sports car championships.

Jacky Ickx of Belgium, who lost to Vatanen last year when Peugeot had the issue between their two tightly matched leading drivers by tossing a coin a few days from the end of the rally, could again be a close rival though he has switched to Lada this time.

The race crosses the Sahara Desert in Niger, Chad, Mali and Mauritania before finishing in the Senegalese capital on January 16.

Yesterday ex-Formula One racing driver Jacques Laffite dropped out of the rally with mechanical trouble before the annual desert test had even started.

The Frenchman's Nissan broke down as he was driving through Paris to the first prologue.

Claude Arnoux of France won the first prologue at Chevilly Larue near Paris.

Vatanen finished just outside the top 10 in his peugeot but Ickx failed to make the first 60 in his Lada.

Many cars had serious problems negotiating the mud.

Vatanen said: "I saw a lot of mud. In the next 11,000 kilometres I expect to see a lot of sand."

Results of the five-kilometre first prologue to the Paris-Dakar rally at Chevilly Larue near Paris:

Cars:
1. Claude Arnoux (France)
Buggy five minutes 29 seconds;

2. Juan Porcar (Spain) Nissan 11 seconds behind;

3. Miguel Prieto-Perez (Spain) Nissan 17;

4. Jean-Claude Briavoine (France) BCBG 17; 5. Jun Nenoto (Japan) Nissan 26; 6. Ali El Abdi (France) Toyota 28;

7. Calvet Selga (Spain) Suzuki 28;

8. Jean Gavot (France) Toyota 29;

9. Luc Nicoldi (Italy) Range Rover 34; 10. Segui Torra (Spain) Suzuki 35.

Motor-cycles:
1. Laurent Charbonnel